

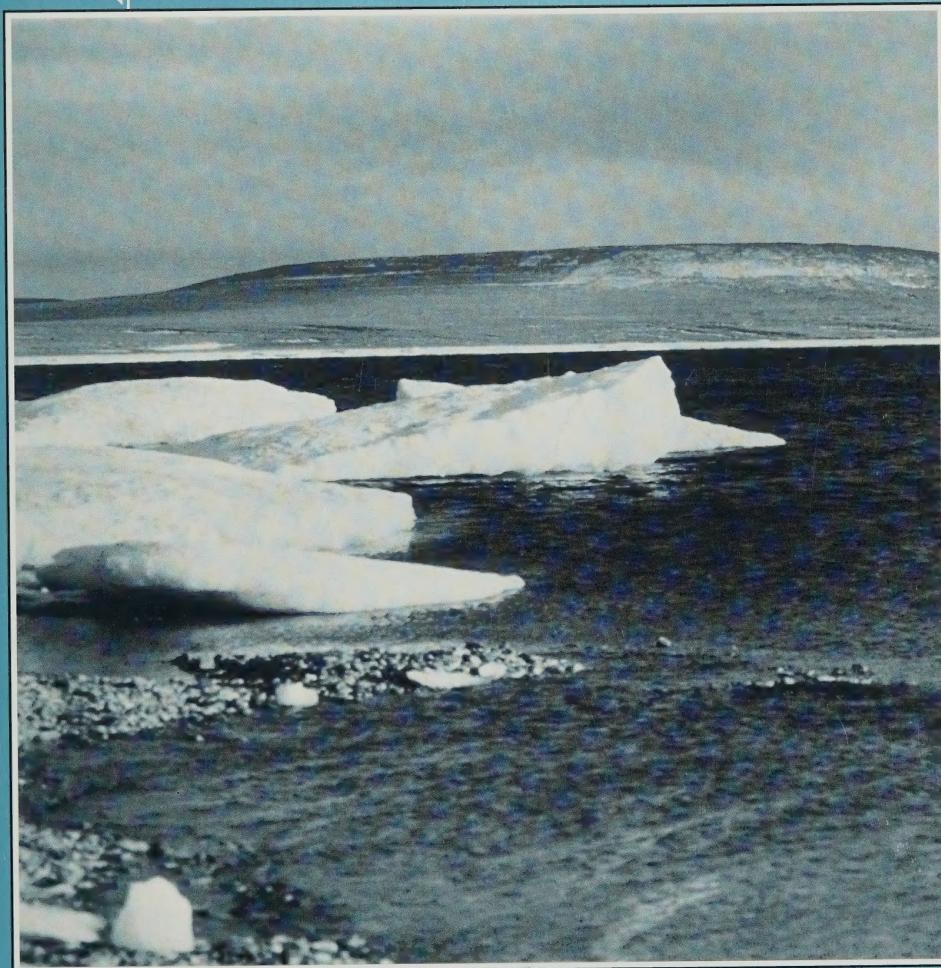


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The High Arctic Relocation



A REPORT ON THE 1953-55 RELOCATION



Royal Commission
on Aboriginal Peoples



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The High Arctic Relocation

A Report
on the 1953-55
Relocation



Royal Commission
on Aboriginal Peoples

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Royal Commission on
Aboriginal Peoples



Commission royale sur
les peuples autochtones

To His Excellency
the Governor General in Council

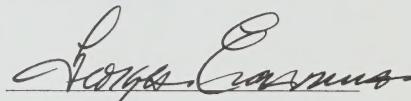
May It Please Your Excellency

We have the honour to submit to you, pursuant to paragraph 9 of Order in Council P.C. 1991-1597, dated August 21, 1991, the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples on the relocation of Inuit families to the High Arctic in 1953 and 1955.

Respectfully submitted,



René Dussault, j.c.a.
Co-Chair



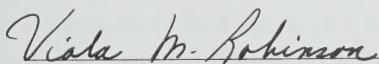
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May 1994
Ottawa, Canada

Contents

Preface	xi
1. Introduction	1
The Issues	1
The Commission's Hearings	3
Organization of this Report	6
Background	7
Note on Terminology	9
2. The Inuit View of Their Homeland and Themselves and Their Relationship with the Administration	10
Homeland and Self	10
Inuit Relationship with the Administration and Non-Inuit	12
Non-Inuit Awareness of Cultural Factors	16
Conclusion	21
3. The Inuit View of the Relocation	22
The Different Circumstances of Individual Relocates	22
The Pond Inlet Inuit	23
Life in Inukjuak	24
Early Experiences in the New Locations	24
Unfulfilled Expectations in the New Locations	26
The Motivation for Going	27
Information About the New Locations	29
The Promise to Return to Inukjuak	30
The Impact of the Relocation	31
An Enduring Impact	34
The Continuing Pursuit of Justice	34
Conclusion	34
4. Eskimo Administration: The Relocation Scheme in Historical Perspective	36
Early Non-Inuit Contacts with Inuit	37
The Administration's Approach to Inuit Well-Being	40
The Importance of Trapping and the Organization of Relief	41

The 1934 High Arctic Relocation	42
The Legal Status of Inuit	44
The Impact of the Second World War	45
Concerns in the Post-War Period	45
Conclusion	46
5. The Relocation Plan	47
The 1949 Collapse of Fur Prices and Discussion of the Problem in the Cantley Report	47
Relocations as a Solution	55
Government Reports of the Early 1950s	55
In Search of a Long-Term Policy	56
The Idea of Relocations Gains Support	57
The Role of the RCMP in Relocations	59
The 1952 Eskimo Affairs Conference	60
Economic Conditions Improve but the Relocation Idea Persists	62
The 1952 Meeting of the Committee on Eskimo Affairs	64
The Idea That Had Emerged	65
The Plan Takes Shape	66
The Relocation Decision	71
The Stated Purpose of the Relocation	72
The Coercive Nature of the Project	74
Conclusion	77
6. Implementing the Relocation	79
The Promise to Return is Added to the Plan	79
The Approach to the Inuit	81
The Information Communicated to the Inuit:	
The Offer of a Better Life?	82
The Pond Inlet Inuit	83
The Fort Chimo Inuit are Dropped from the Plan	84
Forced Separation: The Decision to Send Some of the Inukjuak Families to Resolute Bay	84
Opposition to the Plan and the	
Department's Determination to Proceed	85
Problems with Supplies and Equipment	87
The Issue of Medical Examinations	88

The Department's Instructions to the RCMP Detachments in the High Arctic	88
Conclusion	92
7. An Assessment of Life in the New Locations	93
The Different Environment in the New Communities	93
Isolation and the Experimental Aspect of the Relocation	95
Steps Taken to Remedy Failures in Implementing the Plan	97
The Inuit Sense of Betrayal and Abandonment	99
Life at Craig Harbour/Grise Fiord	100
Life at Resolute Bay	103
The Different Perspectives on the Promise to Return, the 'Success' of the Project, and the Desire to Return Home	104
Enough Game Resources to Support the Relocations?	110
Letters from Relocates	111
Conclusion	114
8. Sovereignty as a Reason for the Relocation	115
Historical Background	116
The Concern with <i>de Facto</i> Sovereignty	118
The Nature of Sovereignty	118
The Significance of Canadian Inuit Presence in the High Arctic	119
Sovereignty and the Relocation Decision	121
Conclusion	132
9. Shedding New Light on the Relocation: Summary of the Commission's Conclusions	134
Inuit Dependence and Vulnerability	135
Inuit Relationship to Homeland and Kin	135
Paternalistic Government Decision Making	136
Sovereignty as a Factor in the Relocation	136
Population Growth or Game Decline Not Factors in the Relocation	136
The Preoccupation with 'Handouts'	136
The Objective of Increased Reliance on Hunting	137
"Overpopulation in Relation to Available Resources"	137
The Goal of 'Rehabilitation'	137
Failure to Disclose the Rehabilitation Goal to the Inuit	137
Relocation Would Not Relieve the Cycles in Hunting and Trapping	137
The Institutional Consensus Supporting Relocations	138

The Relocation Plan	138
The Coercive Aspect of the Plan	138
The Coercive Aspects of Life in the New Communities	138
Misplaced Notions of Success	139
'Rehabilitation' versus Opportunities for Independent Hunters	139
Relocation: A Regressive Step	139
Further Consequences of the Rehabilitation Objective	140
The Deputy Minister Approved Little More than a Concept	140
The Promise to Return	140
No Special Instructions About Obtaining Consent of Inuit	141
The Absence of Free and Informed Consent	141
The Inukjuak Inuit Were Not Told of the Involvement of the Pond Inlet Inuit, and the Two Groups Did Not Get Along Well	141
Failure to Compensate Pond Inlet Inuit	142
The Last-Minute Decision to Send Inukjuak Families to Resolute Bay	142
Forced Separation of the Inukjuak Inuit	142
Inadequate Regard for the Needs of the Relocatees	142
The Spread of Tuberculosis to Resolute Bay	143
The Eskimo Loan Fund was Used Improperly for Departmental Purposes	143
Isolation in the High Arctic	143
The Hardship Adjusting to the New Land	143
Risks to Inuit Health and Life in an Experimental Project and the Inadequacy of Measures to Prevent Hardship	144
Inadequate Provisions for Necessary Boats	145
Hardship and Suffering the Result of an Inherently Unsound Plan	145
Inadequate Supplies for the Trade Stores	145
Difficulty in Finding Spouses	145
Restrictions on Movement	145
The Failure to Honour the Promise to Return	145
The Relocatees' Experiences were Predictable	146
10. The Government's Responsibilities	147
The Lack of Proper Authority to Proceed with a Relocation	148
The Involuntariness of the Relocation	150
Lack of Care and Skill and Broken Promises	153
Inhumane Effects	156
Fiduciary Responsibility	157
Conclusion	159

11. Recommendations	161
Preamble	161
Recommendations	163
 Appendix 1	
Witnesses at the Commission's Hearings of April 5-8, 1993	165
 Appendix 2	
Witnesses at the Commission's Hearings of June 28-30 and July 5, 1993	166
 Appendix 3	
Table of Contents of Supporting Summary	168
 Appendix 4	
Families Relocated to Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay in 1953 and Families Who Moved to Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord in 1955	173
 Appendix 5	
Chronology of Events, 1982-1992	178
 Appendix 6	
The Eskimo Loan Fund	187
 Map	
The High Arctic Relocation, 1953	inside back cover

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Preface

The need for reconciliation between Aboriginal peoples and non-Aboriginal people led to the creation of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples in 1991. In pursuit of that objective, the Commission has been charged with examining all issues it deems to be relevant to any or all of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada. Among these matters are the history of relations between Aboriginal peoples, the government of Canada and Canadian society as a whole; the deep spiritual and cultural ties that bind Aboriginal people to the land; and the special difficulties of Aboriginal people who live in the North. Building on its historical analysis, the Commission may make concrete recommendations.

There have been numerous relocations of Aboriginal people in Canada. The Commission is conducting research into the general subject of relocations that will be incorporated into our final report. The High Arctic relocation has been the subject of considerable controversy and much study. Notwithstanding several reports recommending redress to the relocatees, the complaints of the High Arctic relocatees remain unresolved.

The High Arctic relocation serves as a case study that demonstrates the harm done by well-intentioned but ill-conceived government actions and the resistance from government that Aboriginal people can encounter when seeking redress for long-standing wrongs. This case shows the effect of cultural differences and entrenched institutional behaviour on government initiatives and how

the reality of government action differs from publicly stated goals. The result, in this case, was that the government failed in its responsibilities to the relocatees.

The Commission considers that resolution of the complaints of the High Arctic relocatees will facilitate reconciliation generally between the Inuit and the government of Canada. With the lessons learned from the case of the High Arctic relocation, the Commission also hopes that Canadians, as well as governments, will approach the entire issue of relocations with greater awareness of, and sensitivity to, the concerns and grievances of Aboriginal peoples.



René Dussault
Co-Chair



Georges Erasmus
Co-Chair

Introduction

The Issues

The High Arctic relocations of the 1950s involved the relocation of Inuit from Inukjuak, in northern Quebec, to Craig Harbour on Ellesmere Island and Resolute Bay on Cornwallis Island (see map inside back cover). They were joined by Inuit from Pond Inlet, on Baffin Island, to assist the Quebec Inuit in adjusting to conditions in the High Arctic.

The relocatees have asserted for many years that they were treated unjustly. Their cause has been supported by the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, the national political organization representing Inuit, and its regional affiliate in northern Quebec, Makivik Corporation. After many studies and reports and several changes in its position, the government has acknowledged some failings in the relocation scheme but has insisted that nothing was done that calls for an apology. Views remain sharply divided on whether the relocation was appropriate, and the grievances of the relocatees remain unresolved.

The relocatees consider that the relocation was unnecessary because their life in Inukjuak was satisfactory; that the relocation scheme was misrepresented to them; that the government made promises it had no intention of keeping; that the relocation was imposed on them against their own wishes; and that they suffered great hardship and became virtual prisoners in the High Arctic. They believe they were sent to the High Arctic to assert Canadian sovereignty. The Pond Inlet Inuit believe they should be compensated for assisting in the relocation process.

The contrary view is that the relocation was necessary because life in Inukjuak was not sustainable; that, despite some misunderstandings and unfulfilled promises, the relocatees consented to the relocation; and that, although there was some unforeseeable hardship and a very difficult first year in the High Arctic, overall, life was satisfactory for the relocatees. In this view, sovereignty was not a factor, and compensation for the Pond Inlet Inuit was never contemplated.

The Commission heard a great deal of apparently conflicting evidence. People on both sides of the controversy have suggested that these conflicts can be reconciled only by finding that one side or the other is failing to tell the whole truth about what happened. Moreover, the nature of the evidence on each side is very different. The relocatees' experiences and grievances are part of an oral tradition. The government view of the relocation rests on a great mass of documentary material and research.

These different approaches to recording history raise the question of how various kinds of evidence should be used. Each approach to history – oral and written – must be treated with respect; it would not be appropriate to dismiss oral history simply because of an apparent conflict with the written record. Similarly, it would not be appropriate to accept oral history only if confirmed by written history – and the converse is equally true. The first question is whether, looked at as a whole, there is in fact substantial conflict between the oral history and the documentary record.

The oral testimony of the Inuit added substantial new information to what is known about the relocation. The challenge in understanding this relocation is to open one's mind to the oral history and to read the documentary record in an inquiring spirit, ever mindful of the people who were relocated. The object is not to seek validation of the oral history in the written record. Rather, the first step is to ask whether the information about the relocation tells a substantially consistent story – taking account of the different perspectives – or whether there is substantial conflict. This involves asking, for example, whether the oral history – the experience of the relocatees – reflects what is found in the documentary record. It involves asking how the oral history might help us understand and interpret the documentary record. It involves understanding the broader cultural and institutional contexts from which the oral history and the documentary record come.

To illustrate this approach with an example from the testimony, some of the relocatees said that they were receiving family allowance in Inukjuak but stopped receiving it after they were relocated to the High Arctic. The documentary record shows that family allowances were paid to the relocatees in the High Arctic. This apparent conflict in the evidence is capable of reconciliation. At that time, family allowances were paid to Inuit not in cash but in kind, in the form of food and other items available at trading stores. The trading stores

established in the High Arctic for the relocatees did not always have sufficient supplies on hand to issue these in-kind payments. Instead, family allowance 'payments' were recorded on the trading store's books as a credit owing to the person entitled to the family allowance. The documentary record and the oral history do not conflict, therefore, and it is not necessary to choose between conflicting stories.

The Commission's assessment of the relocation shows that the problem in this case is one of interpretation and understanding. The government position rests on a large volume of documentary material, with the result that much time and effort have been spent on understanding the written record. With the benefit of the new information in the relocatees' oral testimony, it has been possible to reconcile apparent conflicts in the evidence. This reconciliation of the evidence makes it possible for those who hold conflicting views about the relocation to reconcile their differences.

The Commission's study of the relocation also shows the care that must be taken when approaching Aboriginal issues to assure sensitivity to cultural factors and to ensure that the concerns of Aboriginal people are treated with respect, consistent with their fundamental equality as human beings. The lessons of the High Arctic relocation thus go beyond the facts of this particular case.

The Commission's Hearings

The case of the High Arctic relocation was first brought before the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples at a hearing in Inukjuak on June 8, 1992.¹ Four of the relocatees who had moved back to Inukjuak appeared before the Commission and spoke of the hardship and injustice they had endured as a result of the relocation. Co-Chair René Dussault said that the Commission would look into the matter and get back to them. At that time, the government was considering the February 11, 1992 report of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, the Committee's second report dealing with the relocation. The Committee recommended that the government, in consultation with the Inuit, offer an apology and redress to the Inuit.

The Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, the Honourable Tom Siddon, tabled a response on November 20, 1992, in the main rejecting the report and recommendations of the Standing Committee. The response was based extensively on a report by Professor Magnus Gunther, commissioned by the government in August 1991 and completed in August 1992. The government's response was rejected by the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (ITC), speaking on behalf of the relocatees. In a November 26, 1992 statement, the ITC took serious

¹ Monday, June 8, 1992, Transcripts of the Hearings of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples [cited hereafter as Tr.], Volume 1, pp. 53-72.

exception to the findings of the Gunther report and labelled both the response and the Gunther report “an insult”.

On December 14, 1992, the ITC wrote to the Commission stating that more extensive testimony from the relocatees was required, because their testimony before the Standing Committee in 1990 needed elaboration and corroboration. A formal request for hearings was made.

The Commission requested Mary Simon, an Inuk who has played a prominent leadership role in developing Arctic policy principles, and Roger Tassé, a former Deputy Minister of Justice and Deputy Attorney General of Canada, to advise the Commission about its response to the ITC’s request. This advice took the form of a report dated February 1, 1993. The Simon/Tassé report concluded that, overall, the relocatees’ allegations had not been addressed in an entirely fair and just manner by the government. First, the relocatees had not been given a meaningful opportunity to tell their full story. Second, there were serious discrepancies in the findings and conclusions of the various reports and studies on the relocation, discrepancies that had created a great deal of confusion and uncertainty about exactly what happened in the early 1950s. As a result, the task of collating, evaluating and appreciating the evidence remained unfinished, which in turn raised doubts about the validity and correctness of the government’s conclusions about the relocatees’ demands. The Simon/Tassé report concluded that a complete picture of what happened in the High Arctic in the early 1950s would not emerge unless and until the relocatees had been given a meaningful opportunity to tell their full story. The report also suggested that a process was needed to resolve the seriously divergent views and conclusions of the various reports and studies on the relocation and to provide for a better and more complete understanding of some of the important aspects of the relocation.

The Commission accepted the recommendations of the Simon/Tassé report and convened public hearings in Ottawa between April 5 and April 8, 1993 to hear the voices of the relocatees. The Commission heard from 33 Inuit, some of whom were adults at the time of the relocation. Some had been young adults, others had been children, some were born in the High Arctic, and two had remained in Inukjuak. Many were telling their story publicly for the first time. These witnesses are listed in Appendix 1.

The Commission also held a second round of hearings between June 28 and June 30, 1993 and on July 5, 1993. At these hearings, the Commission heard the perspective of former officials,² former members of the RCMP, and others who had some contact with the relocation. The Commission also heard a panel of

² One former official, Graham Rowley, made a number of suggestions to Commission counsel concerning people who might wish to appear before the Commission. Commission counsel pursued these suggestions and advised Mr. Rowley of the results; for the most part the people

experts – Dr. Gordon W. Smith, Professor Donat Pharand, and Mr. Marc Denhez – on the issue of Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic. In addition, Professors Grant, Gunther, Orkin and Soberman and Messrs. Neville, of Hickling Corporation, and Marcus appeared before the Commission to speak to their studies of the relocation.³ These witnesses are listed in Appendix 2. The Commission received a substantial volume of written material at the time of the June hearings, and there were indications that some people wished to provide

suggested did not wish to make a presentation to the Commission. At the end of February 1994, Mr. Rowley submitted additional information to the Commission. This was long after the August 31, 1993 deadline for submissions and at a time when it was no longer possible to incorporate the information into the official record of the Commission's assessment of the relocation. The information was circulated to Commissioners. It did not fundamentally alter the Commission's views on the relocation.

³ Shelagh D. Grant, "A Case of Compounded Error: The Inuit Resettlement Project 1953 and the Government Response 1990", *Northern Perspectives* 19/1 (Spring 1991), as expanded and elaborated by a substantial amount of additional information and commentary provided by Professor Grant to the Commission, including a presentation to the Commission on June 30, 1993, Tr., vol. 3, pp. 770-865, 1067-1082. Professor Grant also provided copies of official documents now residing in various archives. These proved invaluable in understanding the chronological development of the relocation project and the background against which this was occurring, and, in particular, in placing statements by officials quoted in studies of the relocation in their full context.

Magnus Gunther, "The 1953 Relocations of the Inukjuak Inuit to the High Arctic – A Documentary Analysis and Evaluation", August 1992. Professor Gunther elaborated his views in a June 30, 1993 presentation to the Commission, Tr., vol. 3, pp. 940-1082, and in a subsequent written response to the Commission's Questions for Discussion. A list of errata to the written report was also received from Professor Gunther.

Andrew Orkin, "Immersion in the High Arctic: An examination of the relocation of Canadian Inuit in 1953 and the Canadian Government's response to it, particularly from the perspective of the law on experimentation involving human subjects", June 1991. Professor Orkin expanded and elaborated on his views in a July 5, 1993 presentation to the Commission, Tr., vol. 4, pp. 1086-1176.

Daniel Soberman, "Report to the Canadian Human Rights Commission on the Complaints of the Inuit People Relocated from Inukjuak and Pond Inlet, to Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay in 1953 and 1955", December 11, 1991. Professor Soberman elaborated on his report in a June 29, 1993 presentation to the Commission, Tr., vol. 2, pp. 593-634. Professor Soberman's report was prepared at the request of the Canadian Human Rights Commission in response to complaints by the relocatees.

Hickling Corporation, "Assessment of the Factual Basis of Certain Allegations made before the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs Concerning the Relocation of Inukjuak Inuit Families in the 1950s", September 1990. Mr. Bud Neville elaborated on the Hickling Corporation study in a June 29, 1993 presentation to the Commission, Tr., vol. 2, pp. 635-711.

Alan R. Marcus, "Out in the Cold: The Legacy of Canada's Inuit Relocation Experiment in the High Arctic", Document 71 (Copenhägen: International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, 1992). Mr. Marcus elaborated on his views in a June 30, 1993 presentation to the Commission, Tr., vol. 3, pp. 866-940.

additional written information. As a result, the Commission established August 31, 1993 as the deadline for receipt of additional information. The information received after the hearings was placed in the Commission library for public review.

Organization of this Report

The seven chapters following this introduction examine the cultural context for the relocation, the Inuit view of the relocation, the historical context for the relocation scheme and the scheme itself, the planning and implementation of the scheme, the consequences of the relocation, sovereignty as a reason for the relocation, and the various responses to the relocatees' complaints. The final three chapters set out the Commission's conclusions, evaluate the government's responsibilities, and contain the Commission's recommendations.

A substantial volume of information was available to the Commission in its assessment of the High Arctic relocation. The information on which the report is based is summarized in a separate document, Summary of Supporting Information to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples Report on the High Arctic Relocation (referred to for convenience as the Supporting Summary). The Supporting Summary consists of four parts: Part 1 contains a summary of the recollections of the Inuit; Part 2 contains a summary of the recollections of former officials and police officers as well as others who had some contact with the relocation; and Parts 3 and 4 summarize the extensive documentary material related to the relocation. Part 3 deals with the period up to and including the 1953 relocation. Part 4 describes events at the new communities after the initial relocation and includes a chronology of events leading up to the Commission's hearings. The table of contents of the Supporting Summary is provided in Appendix 3 to this report.

The reports and studies referred to earlier are not summarized in the Supporting Summary. These reports stand on their own but have provided much information, which is reflected in Parts 3 and 4 of the Supporting Summary and in this report. Footnotes in this report are limited primarily to direct quotations; references for other information in this report can be found in the Supporting Summary.

The Supporting Summary is being made available to assist anyone interested in the High Arctic relocation by bringing together a summary of the information available to and considered by the Commission in its review of the matter. This approach allows the Commission's report to be read on its own while making available to researchers the detailed information upon which the report rests. In this way, the Commission has attempted to separate the available information from the evaluation and appreciation of that information.

The Commission's report assesses the appropriateness of the relocation and the events that occurred after it. The report focuses on the issues that are central to understanding the relocation and its aftermath. A number of very specific grievances were put before the Commission, such as grievances about payment for services rendered by particular individuals at particular points in time. It is not possible in this report to resolve such grievances, although it is hoped that reconciliation on the broader issues will contribute to a resolution of specific individual grievances.

Background

The High Arctic relocation involved two movements of Inuit in 1953 and 1955. In the summer of 1953, 10 Inuit families, totalling 54 people, were relocated to Craig Harbour, on Ellesmere Island, and Resolute Bay, on Cornwallis Island (see map). Seven families came from Inukjuak (then called Port Harrison), Quebec, and three families came from Pond Inlet on Baffin Island. Three Inukjuak families and one Pond Inlet family, totalling 22 people, went to Resolute Bay. Four Inukjuak families and two Pond Inlet families, totalling 32 people, went to Craig Harbour. The 1953 relocatees were joined in 1955 by a further six families, four from Inukjuak and two from Pond Inlet. One Inukjuak family went to Craig Harbour, while the rest went to Resolute Bay. In 1955, then, there were seven families at Craig Harbour and nine families at Resolute Bay, for a total of about 92 people.⁴ A table showing the families and their relationships is provided in Appendix 4.

The government's plan had been to establish a third community on the east side of Ellesmere Island at Cape Herschel, in the area of the Bache Peninsula, opposite Greenland.⁵ The ship could not get through, however, and the Inuit families destined for that area, two from Inukjuak and one from Pond Inlet, were taken to Craig Harbour instead. They joined the two Inukjuak families and one Pond Inlet family already there, bringing the total to six families. It was lucky that the Inuit were not put ashore at Cape Herschel, since game did not appear there that year, and the Inuit could not have survived.

The relocatees' sea voyage began in late July 1953 in Inukjuak when they boarded the *C.D. Howe*. In late August the *C.D. Howe* arrived at Pond Inlet and picked up the Pond Inlet families. The ship then proceeded to Craig Harbour where it met another ship, the *d'Iberville*. At that point, the Inukjuak families were divided into three groups; they had not been told before the trip that they would be separated. The group that was to stay at Craig Harbour was put ashore at the

⁴ The available information allows for precision only within one or two people. The figures given exclude the Inuit special constables and their families at Craig Harbour.

⁵ The area has also been referred to as Cape Sabine and Alexandra Fiord.

end of August 1953. The rest were transferred to the *d'Iberville*, which attempted unsuccessfully to reach Cape Herschel. The *d'Iberville* returned to Craig Harbour in early September and put ashore the group that was to have gone to Cape Herschel. The *d'Iberville* then proceeded to Resolute Bay, where the remainder of the families disembarked on September 7, 1953.

Craig Harbour is on the south coast of Ellesmere Island about 35 miles east of Grise Fiord. The west side of the fiord is bounded by the Lindstrom Peninsula, which is 40 miles from Craig Harbour, and this was where the Inuit camp was established. The police post and small police-managed trading store were at Craig Harbour. In 1956, the police post and the store moved to Grise Fiord. A few years later, the Inuit settlement was moved to Grise Fiord from the Lindstrom Peninsula. The police post had been re-established in 1951 and was staffed by two non-Inuit members of the RCMP and two Inuit special constables who lived there with their families. The special constables originated from Pond Inlet.

Resolute Bay was the site of a large military base and weather station. The Inuit camp was located a few miles from the base. A police post was re-established at Resolute Bay in 1953 with one non-Inuit member of the RCMP but no special constables. A small police-managed trade store was also established in 1953.

The High Arctic islands were not inhabited by Inuit, unlike Pond Inlet and Inukjuak, which had been places of Inuit settlement for centuries. Inukjuak had a population of about 500 Inuit at the time and was a significant regional centre with a police post, weather and radio station, harbour, Hudson's Bay store, school, nursing station, and church missions. It was also a traditional Inuit hunting and fishing area.

A large number of relocatees returned home to Inukjuak and Pond Inlet, initially at their own expense, in the 1970s and 1980s. Later the government accepted responsibility for returning the relocatees and in 1988 paid for a number of relocatees to return. The government has also paid for further returns and visits.

The relocatees have complained for years about the treatment they received. Two unanimous reports of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs have found the complaints to be substantiated and recommended that the government provide redress. The special investigation conducted by Professor Soberman for the Canadian Human Rights Commission concluded that the government failed in its fiduciary duties of care and diligence to the relocatees. The government commissioned its own study by Professor Gunther and has relied on the findings of the Gunther report to provide support on points of historical detail. The chronology of events since 1982 is summarized in Appendix 5 to this report.

The government and the relocatees remain far apart in their views on the relocation.

The Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, as representative of the relocatees, has argued that the relocation was imposed on the Inuit without their free and informed consent and, in addition, that the relocation was executed poorly and in a manner that was inexcusably insensitive to the most basic needs of the Inuit as human beings. ITC referred to the government's failure to provide properly for food, shelter, and other necessities of life and its failure to fulfil its promises not to separate the families upon arrival in the High Arctic and to provide for the return of the Inuit at their option. The relocatees believe that they were sent to the High Arctic for sovereignty reasons.

The government's view of the relocation, as expressed in its response to the Standing Committee, is that the relocation was initiated with humane intentions to improve the economic circumstances of the Inukjuak Inuit and was based on the consent of those who moved. The relocation was not made to affirm or protect Canadian sovereignty in the High Arctic. The government has acknowledged that there were deficiencies in the manner in which the relocation was planned and implemented and that the Inuit suffered both emotional and physical stress as a result of being moved so far from their own community and being separated from family and friends. The government has also acknowledged that the relocatees' first year in the High Arctic was a very difficult one. The government has further acknowledged the inappropriateness of the failure to honour the promise, made to the Inuit at the time of the relocation, to return them to Inukjuak if they were not happy in the High Arctic. The government was not prepared to apologize for undertaking the relocation, but did acknowledge that shortcomings in the planning and implementation of the relocation caused unintended emotional and physical hardship. The government was prepared to take further corrective action, including expenditures for moves back to Inukjuak, for additional housing if required, and for visits between family members, but it indicated that the payment of additional compensation was not contemplated.

Note on Terminology

The relocation decision was made by the Department of Resources and Development, which was then responsible for Inuit affairs. Its predecessor departments included the Department of the Interior and the Department of Mines and Resources. Its successors are the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, created in 1954, and the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. References to 'the Department' in this report mean the department that had responsibility for Inuit affairs at the time referred to.

The Inuit View of Their Homeland and Themselves and Their Relationship With the Administration

The relocation occurred as a result of a decision by a government made up of non-Inuit. An understanding of Inuit culture and the relationship between Inuit and non-Inuit is essential to any assessment of the relocation. Whether non-Inuit were aware of relevant cultural factors is also important in understanding the relocation.

Homeland and Self

Professor Robert Williamson of the Department of Anthropology, University of Saskatchewan, has observed that Inuit have an intimate relationship with their traditional environment. What the Inuit refer to as their land in fact describes the totality of the environment, both physical and human. It has connotations going beyond that of landscape, seascape and icescape; Professor Williamson calls it the “namescape”. Each geographical feature in the traditional environment has at least one name, sometimes more than one depending on which angle it is seen from, or at what time of the year, or even the state of the tide.

This namescape is a very important context of reality for the people within their own environment. The individual dialect groups are identified by the geographical names which they use as well as identifying themselves in their habitat. The attention to this habitat is as strong as the attachment of kinship. It is a love of a very profound kind.

Every geographic feature...has names and the name is a metaphor for the totality of the group remembrance of all forms of land relatedness,

of the successes and failures in hunting, it recalls births, deaths, childhood, marriage, death, adventure. It recalls the narrations and the ancient sanctified myths.

The sense of belonging, the sense of participation in a network is extended through the relationship of kin because the kinsfolk are seen to be part of this physical and metaphysical environment. Those who have seeded bones in the land are recalled into vivid existence by the naming system. People who have been archaeologically known to have inhabited this territory for more than 5,000 years recall this long experience of relatedness with their environment through their naming, whereby the name is the soul and soul is the name and they live in a matrix of inter-relatedness with each other, whereby people never felt alone or in unfamiliar circumstances or surroundings.⁶

Inuit values strongly emphasize family commitments, family loyalties, the love of family, and the significance of family. The bonds are emotional and form physical and metaphysical links with the network of the society.⁷

The importance of the social network is seen in the observations of W. E. Willmott, who spent a summer at Inukjuak as a graduate student in 1958. Willmott's study found that the most important form of recreation among the Inukjuak Inuit was visiting, of which there were five different forms, each with an appropriate behaviour for the host and guests.⁸

Professor Williamson points out that, in the case of Inuit who have been relocated, the question of returning to their homeland or staying in their new land would involve difficult choices and uncertainty about what to do. They would have a commitment to the family surrounding them in the new place, but also a commitment to other members of the family back home.⁹

Professor Williamson's description of the intimate relationship of Inuit homeland and self also reveals the importance of language in Inuit culture. The language is rich in detailed observations and carries with it an extensive body of knowledge that has been preserved and passed on from generation to generation. This oral tradition is central to Inuit culture; it is the precise and accurate way in which an extensive body of knowledge, extending back through many generations, has been meticulously maintained.

Williamson's observations also show that relocation to a distant place for an extended period could be very hard for Inuit. The hardship could involve a

⁶ Wednesday, June 30, 1993, Presentation to Commission, Tr., vol. 3, pp. 719-720.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 720.

⁸ W.E. Willmott, "The Eskimo Community at Port Harrison, P.Q." (Northern Affairs and National Resources, 1961).

⁹ Wednesday, June 30, 1993, Presentation to Commission, Tr., vol. 3, p. 757.

sense of isolation, feelings of loneliness, a loss of meaning to life, and a powerful need to be at home and see kin.

Inuit Relationship with the Administration and Non-Inuit

For many years, government administration in the Arctic took the form of the local RCMP detachment. Professor Williamson has observed that the RCMP held the power of the law and, in the isolated Arctic, held that power without the checks and controls that exist in a society of equals, such as among non-Inuit in southern Canada. The RCMP were seen as having extraordinary legal power and an extraordinary reputation for being able to deliver the results of this legal power. Anything they said would be treated with respect and considered inordinately carefully. The most mild inquiry from an RCMP member would carry much more weight than it would in the south.¹⁰ For decades, continuing into the 1950s, the RCMP were the “*embodiment and custodians of Canadian Government policy*” and carried out almost every government function, from handing out family allowances to enforcing the law in the Arctic.¹¹

More generally, the introduction of the fur trade into the Arctic in the early decades of this century represented an external economic force upon which Inuit became dependent. A cycle was established in which fur traders would grubstake trappers. This was a form of credit that enabled the Inuit trappers to acquire the goods offered by the traders and that the Inuit would come to need. It also maintained the relationship between the trader and the Inuit by creating an obligation to repay the advance with furs.

As this cycle of dependency evolved, Inuit developed a sense of wariness and uncertainty about the unpredictable, enormously powerful non-Inuit. This created a sense of awe and unease among the Inuit, producing in turn a set of responses that included appearing to agree when they felt under pressure. They would do this to take the pressure off, to give themselves time to think things over, talk among themselves, and try to come to some conclusion. Another response to pressure would be to say, “I don’t know”, avoiding a commitment until the implications of what was being pressed could be seen.¹²

Inuit did have friendly relationships with non-Inuit, but these relationships did not alter their apprehension with respect to non-Inuit. Professor Williamson has stated this as follows:

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 762.

¹¹ Dr. Richard Diubaldo, “The Government of Canada and the Inuit: 1900-1967” (Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1985), pp. 14 and 115, as referred to in the written statement by Rosemarie Kuptana, President, Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, “Human Rights Aspects of the High Arctic Exiles’ Experience”, August 16, 1993.

¹² Williamson, Tr., pp. 723-725.

However much one came to like and trust and joke with and travel with and have sociability with one of the local whites, be he a Mounted Policeman, or a trader or a missionary, one never lost sight of the fact that they were the end of a long line of distant authorities with objectives and agenda which were perhaps not fully known and not entirely predictable. Therefore, people had to be approached with caution.

...

...but the tendency usually, by and large, in those days was for an inference of intention, an exploratory inquiry to be interpreted by the Inuit as something rather more executively impelled having more the power of, if not an order, at least a desire that it would be in one's best interests to take very seriously and, if at all possible, accept.¹³

The question of consent is therefore difficult and complex. The presumption of relative equality of knowledge and bargaining position, which underlies commonly accepted non-Inuit attitudes to the obtaining and giving of consent, does not fit the facts of relations between Inuit and non-Inuit at the time of the relocation.

Rosemarie Kuptana, President of the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, has stated that the central issue in the High Arctic relocatees' experience is the power relationship between Inuit and non-Inuit. The Inuktitut word that describes this relationship is *illira*, which means feelings of great awe and fear. The use of this term to describe Inuit feelings toward non-Inuit during the 1950s has been documented in the following terms:

There is an Inuk word which characterizes the feeling that whites inspire in Inuit. That word (or root) is *illira*, which is not easy to translate. It is a kind of fear, a blend of awe and intimidation, the feeling you have about a person whose behaviour you can neither control nor predict, but who is perhaps going to be dangerous. It is the feeling you have when you are in a room full of important strangers whose language you cannot understand: the feeling inspired by the trader, the missionary and the policeman, white strangers who were so obviously powerful, upon whom Inuit were so acutely dependent and who told people what to do and believe but who were not often disposed to listen to what Inuit wanted to do and believe. Indeed, Inuit expressed their surprise and pleasure when they have dealings with a white who does not make them feel *illira*.¹⁴

Hugh Brody has said that these feelings of awe and fear arose from the erosion of Inuit culture, self-reliance and self-confidence as colonialism affected Inuit communities. Decades of contact with non-Inuit and their institutions created

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 752-753.

¹⁴ Hugh Brody, "Illira: Meeting with the White Man", Canadian Association in Support of Native Peoples, Bulletin 18.1, 1977, as referred to in the August 16, 1993 statement by Rosemarie Kuptana.

feelings of dependency and powerlessness, which came to typify the relationship between Inuit and non-Inuit. This in turn often led to the development of a quiet, self-effacing personality in which fear and sadness were masked by a public face of cheerfulness and obedience. Hugh Brody has described this as follows:

In the course of two or more decades of dealings with whites, Inuit came to have expectations and attitudes strongly influenced by the “illira” they felt. They did not expect to be able to state their own opinions and criticisms of what southerners were doing, they tended to accept the decisions of traders and missionaries and to avoid all possible confrontation. There took place “political retreatism”, but with the careful preservation of a cheerful and obedient countenance. This meant they were inclined to smile and look cheerful whenever they had dealings with whites; it also meant that they did what they were asked to do, even when it was, in reality, something they thought wrong or foolish. Ultimately, it also meant that they subordinated themselves to the changing whims of individuals no less than to shifts in prices or policies by which their lives were so profoundly affected.¹⁵

Inuit parents, for example, have said that they wanted to refuse when approached by officials about sending their children to residential schools, but they acquiesced as a consequence of their subordinate and dependent relationship with non-Inuit.

The relationship between Inuit and non-Inuit was further complicated by the Inuit characteristic of emotional restraint in the face of difficult situations.

Inuit tend not to display their emotions publicly as this is considered immature and may place other people in the potentially awkward position of being forced to react to a situation they consider to be a very private matter. A stranger may see a smiling and attentive Inuk but the underlying emotions may be quite different than that which is expressed. Emotions are expressed more freely in smaller, more intimate groups. If the person cannot contain himself emotionally then it is felt that his reaction should be restrained and involve only those people whom he feels are responsible for his emotional state.¹⁶

Although much has changed since the 1950s, the relationship at that time between Inuit and non-Inuit was also characterized by an imbalance of information and knowledge. Many Inuit had little knowledge of how government worked, what rights they enjoyed as citizens, and whether they could disagree with a government decision or request. W. E. Willmott has observed that the changes brought about by non-Inuit had not been overtly opposed by the Inuit

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Pauktuutit, “The Inuit Way”, 1991, p. 18, as referred to in the August 16, 1993 statement by Rosemarie Kuptana. This tendency has changed over time. Some Inuit are more demonstrative of their feelings, as was evident during the Commission’s April 1993 hearings.

but had been seen, like the environment generally, as something the Inuit could do nothing about; the unfortunate consequence was that the Inuit accepted "as an environmental axiom much that in democratic society is considered an individual's prerogative and duty". Willmott noted that "The right to choice of religion, *the right to movement*, the duty to work, the right to bargain as a free agent, and the right and duty of education for children...do not usually involve individual choice among Eskimos in this area." (emphasis added)¹⁷ The deference of Inuit to the wishes of non-Inuit is reflected in Willmott's observations concerning purchases by Inuit at the trading store. Willmott observed that "savings are meagre and appear to be the result of *suggestions* from the HBC [Hudson's Bay Company] store staff that...[the Inuit]...may interpret as *commands*". (emphasis added)¹⁸

Brody has characterized the complexity of the relationship between Inuit and non-Inuit as follows:

An array of forces lay behind this relationship. There was fear, but there was also respect. The Qallunaat [literally, 'persons with a pale or white face', i.e., Caucasians] were rich and powerful; they DID give hope; they DID provide medicines, guns, fabrics, tea, tobacco. They were often generous. Their supplies seemed to be inexhaustible. Once the spiral of dependency had begun to turn, the Qallunaat offered some genuine security.

This relationship also meant that the Qallunaat developed a particular approach to the Inuit. They took their authority for granted. Perhaps the ways in which Inuit responded to them gave the Qallunaat a strong sense of superiority. The Inuit were so appreciative, so welcoming, so eager to please, forever saying how clever Qallunaat were. The prejudices and ideologies of the day asserted that the Inuit were indeed inferior, and that the Qallunaat knew what was best for the Inuit soul, mind and body.

...

So here were Qallunaat: they inspired illira, they could make the difference between success and disaster, they could make the difference between life and death; they said what they wanted and needed, and they would expect to get it because they more or less always did get it; they did not explain themselves – they did not need to and in any case they would not be able to manage the necessary Inuktitut;

¹⁷ Willmott, p. 125. Portions of Willmott are referred to in the report prepared by Professor Gunther (pp. 127-135). The passages quoted above are not contained in the Gunther report, although Gunther does refer to the accepting character of the Inuit described by Willmott with a view to suggesting that the Inuit were remarkably adaptable people. Gunther does not explore the implications of Willmott's observations regarding the unfortunate consequences of such an accepting nature.

¹⁸ Brody, p. 118. The implications of this passage are also not explored by Gunther.

they “knew” what was best for the Inuit; and they surely would not suggest anything that was terribly bad for the Inuit. After all, they were so friendly with the people.¹⁹

Brody has observed that not all Inuit were affected to the same degree by the arrival of non-Inuit in the Arctic. The effects of non-Inuit culture on Inuit culture did differ in degree in different parts of the Arctic but the effects were of the same kind. The people of northern Baffin Island, an area often said to be among the richest in resources, the best for hunting, and where Inuit are regarded as having been proudly independent, say that they were profoundly intimidated by non-Inuit and felt too much *illira* to oppose the taking of their children away to boarding schools. The dependence and vulnerability of the people of northern Quebec was much greater than that of the people in northern Baffin Island, which suggests to Brody that their subservience to non-Inuit was even greater.

Professor Williamson considers that the complexity of the relationship between Inuit and non-Inuit in light of these cultural issues makes it very difficult to make unequivocal statements about what was said and what was done in matters involving Inuit and non-Inuit. Brody considers that dependence and the imbalance of power were the source of many forms of silence, reticence and misunderstanding between Inuit and non-Inuit and that language problems compounded the difficulties of consultation and communication.

The effect of these cultural differences on the recruitment of families to go to the High Arctic is evident in the Inuit testimony to the Commission. Those testifying said that the RCMP were persistent and insistent that the people should go; that many people did not understand that they had the right to refuse to go; that the agreement to go was given reluctantly and was induced by misrepresentations and promises such as the promise to return; and that some people went because members of their immediate or extended families were going and they did not wish to be separated from their relatives. By contrast, former administrators consider that the Inuit were ‘sold’ on the relocation as an opportunity for a better life.

Non-Inuit Awareness of Cultural Factors

Awareness among non-Inuit of these cultural factors is not a recent phenomenon. Astute observers saw the imbalances in the relationship soon after contact. The impact of the fur trade on Inuit life and the control exercised by traders are seen in reports about traders organizing trapping by Inuit. Inuit would be encouraged to live near trading posts and to trap in areas designated by the traders while living, in part at least, on food rations issued by the traders. As one early

¹⁹ Hugh Brody, “Some Historical Aspects of the High Arctic Exiles’ Experience”, Submission to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, pp. 4-5 (submitted in writing during the Commission’s June 1993 hearings).

observer noted, in some cases, people were moved from their traditional hunting areas to areas designated by the traders “without their consent but in the face of as strenuous a protest as an Eskimo, with his fear of the trader, dared to make. And once there, would live in misery.” This was “one of the strongest arguments against permitting the establishment of trading posts on any of the uninhabited islands”, as it would “mean the deportation of native families from the countries in which they have been born and lived, the separation of close relatives and a new settlement, the site of which will be selected primarily as a fur centre”.²⁰ These comments were made in 1924. It was ten years later, in 1934, that the government authorized the opening of a trading post at Dundas Harbour on Devon Island in the High Arctic and the relocation of Inuit from Cape Dorset on southern Baffin Island. The 1934 relocation is discussed in more detail later, but the cultural issues related to it are of interest here.

The 1934 relocation gave rise to problems of interpretation similar to those present in the relocations of the 1950s. Dr. Richard Diubaldo, the McGill University anthropologist, and Diamond Jenness, a pioneer in Arctic research and a former public servant, described the families who went in 1934 as having “volunteered”, but the term was in quotation marks in their texts.²¹ Jenness reports that in 1939 arrangements were made for the transportation of several additional families from Cape Dorset who wished to join families who had been relocated to Dundas Harbour in 1934 and subsequently, by 1939, to the area of Arctic Bay and Fort Ross. The 1940 Eastern Arctic Patrol report stated that “While some of the adult natives of the Dorset Culture who migrated northward in 1934 would probably avail themselves of an opportunity to return to their birthplaces, the majority are happy, contented and prosperous in their new surroundings more than six hundred miles north...”.²² By contrast, Henry Larsen, commanding the RCMP’s floating St. Roch Detachment, stated in a 1942 report that the people who had been relocated to Dundas Harbour, then to Arctic Bay and later to Fort Ross wanted very much to go home to Cape

²⁰ Diubaldo, pp. 63-64, quoting from an October 30, 1924 memorandum from L.T. Burwash to O.S. Finnie, Director of the Northwest Territories Branch of the Department of the Interior.

²¹ *Ibid.* Diamond Jenness, “Eskimo Administration: II, Canada”, Arctic Institute of North America Technical Paper No. 14, May 1964, reprinted in March 1972. Jenness, a contemporary observer, was critical of both the 1934 and 1953 relocations. He believed that a relocation could work if the relocatees were properly prepared for it and if the government put in place the means to maintain close contact with the home communities. He considered that the 1934 and 1953 relocations imposed hardships on the relocatees as a result of isolation because the government did not spend the money necessary for logistical support if the new communities were to have close contact with the home communities.

²² RG85, vol. 64; document provided by Grant, obtained from M.A. Van Meehen.

Dorset.²³ Larsen's memories of the unhappiness caused by the Dundas Harbour relocation would lead him, in 1953, to instruct the RCMP members in northern Quebec to tell the Inuit being recruited to go to the High Arctic that they could return home after a year if they wished.²⁴

The influence of local traders on the Inuit is evident from a 1943 report from Fort Ross. Hudson's Bay Company records state that in the spring of 1943, all of the 1934 relocatees had the "crazy idea" of going home to Cape Dorset. The post manager talked them out of this. He arranged for some of them to talk by radio with people at Cape Dorset who told them of the hunting and trapping conditions there. The post manager persuaded the people that they were better off at Fort Ross because hunting and trapping were better. It appears that there had been some supply problems, because the post manager also assured the Inuit that the supply ship would get through that year.²⁵

The contrast between the positive description of the 1934 relocation in the 1940 Eastern Arctic Patrol report and the unhappiness evident in Larsen's report and implicit in the Hudson's Bay Company report calls to mind a comment by Jenness that criticism of activities in the North was not welcome. Diubaldo has also remarked on the contrast between reports on conditions coming back from sources such as the Eastern Arctic Patrol and the reality of conditions in the Arctic. In addition to the other cultural factors with a bearing on the relocation, then, it appears that the 'culture' of government administration did not fully support candid comment on government action affecting the Inuit. As will be seen, government sensitivity to criticism about conditions in the Arctic had its roots in decades of neglect.

The inequality in the relationship between Inuit and non-Inuit and the vulnerability of the Inuit to decisions made by non-Inuit is evident in a 1958 memorandum from a senior government official discussing the indisputably disastrous relocation of Inuit from Ennadai Lake to Henik Lake in the Keewatin District in the 1950s. Those Inuit suffered starvation at the new location, and the relocation also led to several murders among the Inuit. The memorandum assesses that relocation in the following terms:

Moves have rarely been successful unless they are done with the full consent of the people concerned. To us, one part of the barrens may appear very much like another, but this is not the case with the Eskimos. The region where they have lived for many years has associa-

²³ Report from Paisley Bay, 8 May 1942, RG18, acc. 85-86/048, vol. 2, file D1412-2-4-Q27; quoted by Grant in vol. 1 of written materials provided to the Commission supplementing her oral presentation.

²⁴ April 14, 1953 memoranda to Port Harrison, Fort Chimo and Pond Inlet detachments and to the Department of Resources and Development.

²⁵ Marjorie Hinds, *High Arctic Venture* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1968), p. 62.

tions which mean a great deal to them and detailed knowledge of any area is essential for hunters who wish to exploit its potentialities fully. [Given]...that these Eskimos liked the Ennadai region and did not want to leave it, it appeared unlikely that the move was really accepted by them. It is, of course, comparatively easy to get a temporary acquiescence from Eskimos to any suggestion put to them, and especially from this group who go to great lengths to avoid any form of conflict.

...In this case the Eskimos probably felt a real resentment at being moved from an area where they had lived for a long time. They may have thought that the moves from Ennadai were directly connected with the fact that the white man had established a radio station there, and that they implied that the white man wanted to get rid of them from the area.

It seems clear that only two years ago the Eskimos were happy and contented at Ennadai. The deterioration which appears to have set in is certainly owing in part to their being moved to unfamiliar surroundings. Another reason is probably a lack of discipline which has resulted from weakening the normal tribal procedures. Among the Eskimos in general, and specifically among this tribe, decisions on moving a camp are reached after considerable discussion within the tribe.... The decision to move, to Henik Lake, initiated from the outside, cannot have failed to weaken the authority of those who usually decide these things, and may have contributed to the general despondency reported in the new area.

Referring to the decision to move the survivors of the fiasco to Eskimo Point, the memorandum goes on as follows:

At present there is a scheme to start a settlement on the coast where possibly thirty or more families might be brought from inland and taught how to live on the resources of the sea. I cannot help feeling myself that this is a little premature until we know how great a population can be supported from the resources of the sea. Certainly Eskimo Point does not sound particularly flourishing at present. At this coastal settlement, if it is ever established, the plan is that the Eskimos would run a co-operative store and they would have boats sufficiently large to allow them to go far afield in their quest for fish, seals and white whales. So far as I can determine the idea is to get these Eskimos and to put them where nobody else can get to them, no company, no missions, only a benevolent Administration. In this way they would be protected against everybody – except of course the government. I asked who would protect them against the government but this was of course assumed to be a joke. If this scheme goes through – and there is a good possibility that something along these lines will be done – we will then have two policies going on at once. One might be described as “integrate at any cost and the devil take the hindmost” and the other as the ultimate in paternalism, with a just, strict and uncomprehending

Victorian father. In pursuing these two extremes, which at any rate appear incompatible, it looks as if the gradual planned adjustment to conditions which are changing will be neglected.²⁶

Apart from the issue of consent,²⁷ this memorandum is interesting for its recognition, based on knowledge available in the 1950s,²⁸ of the attachment of Inuit to the environment with which they are familiar, the tendency of Inuit to seek to avoid conflict by appearing to acquiesce in suggestions put to them; the resentment that can emerge when actions are taken that do not accord with the wishes and desires of the Inuit; and the potential impact of a government-initiated relocation on the social fabric of an Inuit community. The word picture of the just, strict and uncomprehending Victoria father captures the stern paternalistic model that Diubaldo believes prevailed into the early 1950s, with sometimes painful consequences for the Inuit.²⁹

The 1958 memorandum is especially interesting because it suggests that government decision making in that period typically did not take into account cultural factors such as the special problems of obtaining consent from the Inuit. Nor were the desires and aspirations of the Inuit considered in decisions. This was not because these things could not have been recognized and taken into account; it appears simply to have been a case of the Victorian father knowing best.

Gunther argues that the government policy of the day was to obtain the consent of the Inuit and explains away the various instances of decisions being imposed on the Inuit as exceptions, as actions by local officials contrary to the policy, or as situations that fell short of genuine compulsion.³⁰ However, the introduction to his report acknowledges that his study was based on government documents and did not take into account cultural differences or the voices of the relocatees themselves.³¹ When the cultural factors are explored more fully as the first step

²⁶ Memorandum from Graham Rowley to Geert Vandensteenoven, as quoted in Diubaldo, pp. 123-126. Mr. Rowley is a former senior public servant who made a presentation to the Commission concerning the High Arctic relocation.

²⁷ The author of this memorandum, Graham Rowley, expressed the view, in a June 1993 presentation to the Commission, that the 1953 High Arctic relocation was successful and that the relocatees were willing participants, although misunderstandings were possible.

²⁸ Inuit attachment to home is referred to in the report of Alex Stevenson, commanding the 1951 Eastern Arctic Patrol, in the following terms: "Certain schools of thought feel that it is sufficient punishment if a native is moved from his home region and banished permanently to another area of the Arctic. It is true that the average Eskimo does not care to go too far afield, especially if he is told he will never be allowed to return to his home." RG85, vol. 1127, file 201-1-8, Part 3, as quoted by Grant.

²⁹ Diubaldo, pp. 52, 126, 137, 163.

³⁰ Gunther, pp. 142-151.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

in understanding the relocation, it is clear that the typical pattern of government action in fact was very different from Gunther's perception and that the instances Gunther explains away are actually examples of what was typical. Moreover, to say that government policy required consent and that a government official wanted Inuit consent or considered that the Inuit had consented is not the end of the inquiry. One must go further and ask what this 'consent' meant, given the cultural factors that made the obtaining and giving of consent difficult and complex. In short, one must look behind the supposed policy and see whether the policy was made effective in reality. Governments must do more than say the words; they must do what is needed to make the words into deeds.

As will be seen in the following chapters, the High Arctic relocation largely followed the then typical pattern of government decision making concerning the Inuit.

Conclusion

The High Arctic relocation took place in a cultural context where Inuit tended, to a greater or lesser extent, to feel dependent on non-Inuit and powerless in their dealings with them. The power held by non-Inuit over Inuit was understood by non-Inuit, and even the wishes of well-intentioned non-Inuit could be taken as orders by Inuit. The government was present in the Arctic in the form of the RCMP who were held in particular awe by the Inuit.

The Inukjuak area has been inhabited for centuries by large numbers of Inuit and is a traditional hunting and fishing area. The Inuit have a particular attachment to homeland and kin. This attachment was known by non-Inuit at the time of the relocation. It was predictable that any relocation to a distant place for an extended period would be very hard for Inuit.

The Inuit View of the Relocation

The Commission's April 1993 hearings gave many relocatees their first opportunity to tell their story publicly. The Commission provided four days for the relocatees to talk about all aspects of their experiences. The Commission heard from 33 Inuit (see Appendix 1). Some were adults at the time of the relocation; some were young adults; some were born in the High Arctic.

The Different Circumstances of Individual Relocatees

The story of the relocatees comes from different generations, from people who were relocated at different times, and from people originally from different communities – Pond Inlet and Inukjuak. The relocation did not affect everyone in the same way. Pond Inlet is a High Arctic community, for example, and the Pond Inlet relocatees did not have the same difficulty adjusting to the new environment as the Inuit from Inukjuak. Samuel Arnakallak, who came from Pond Inlet, spoke of the difficulties the Inukjuak Inuit had because they were not used to conditions in the High Arctic and had equipment that was not suited to hunting and travelling there.³²

...the Inukjuak people, had never been in the dark or in the high Arctic darkness, and we were charged with teaching them the particularities

³² The detailed information on which this chapter is based is summarized and referenced in Part 1 of the Supporting Summary.

of the climate. We were...able to get around in the dark – in the high Arctic dark – through dog-team travel.³³

The Inukjuak people's dog teams have very, very long traces. I had never seen that before. They were not very suitable for use in a place that was almost bare of snow.³⁴

Jaybeddie Amaraulik, also from Pond Inlet, was able to catch seals and did not experience great hardship. He knew how to hunt and had the equipment to hunt seals in the High Arctic, whereas the Inukjuak Inuit lacked the experience and equipment and had had a very different diet in Inukjuak.

The Pond Inlet Inuit

The Pond Inlet Inuit who relocated in 1953 understood that they were providing a service to the government by giving guidance to the Inukjuak Inuit. They expected to be paid for this service but were not. Samuel Arnakallak was not recruited directly by the police but was approached by Joseph Idlout. When Arnakallak heard that the government wanted to recruit three families, he agreed to go right away, believing this to be a good opportunity to get himself a boat.

Jaybeddie Amaraulik also speaks of being approached by the “Inuk employee” of the police and agreeing to go because he believed that he could live off fox pelts and polar bear pelts; would be able to travel back and forth for visits to Pond Inlet; and did not need to fear anything because the government would provide for all their needs.

Simon Akpaliapik states that at first he did not agree to go but in the end he agreed to go because he was told that he would earn some money; that game was plentiful; and that where they were going they would get government help. He expected that the government would help the Inuit out and that they would be well housed in the new places. He summed up life at Craig Harbour by saying that it was too hard.

The first time I did not agree to leave my land, because it's the only land I knew. ...The only reason why I agreed to go was, we were told we would earn some money and...the game was plentiful. There was caribou. Because where we were now...there was not much caribou any more. So, there, we were told there was plenty of caribou and lots of game, and help out the ones that had never lived up in the dark, in the High Arctic. ...We were told that each month you would be allowed to have caribou; seven or eight caribou each month. That was good news. That's one of the reasons why I agreed to go. ...We were told that we were going to a place with plenty, but we found out that it

³³ Tuesday, April 6, 1933, Tr., vol. 2, p. 159.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 163-164.

was exactly the other way around. The government should have told us the truth. ...but they told us all lies.³⁵

The relationship between the Pond Inlet and Inukjuak Inuit was difficult. There were cultural and linguistic differences in addition to the perception that the Inukjuak Inuit were welfare cases.

Life in Inukjuak

The Pond Inlet Inuit had been told that the people from Inukjuak had been living on welfare and needed help. However, the relocatees from Inukjuak did not consider themselves to be poor or in need. Minnie Allakariallak said that in Inukjuak the men had the equipment they needed and there was plenty of game for food so that they had no worries or cares.

...we had plenty of seal meat and fish...there were lots of lakes...where there was fish and the fish would migrate and there will be plenty of fish along the shoreline. There was lots of food, birds, so we were not worried. We were not thinking of moving anywhere else.³⁶

Samwillie Eliasialuk said that the Inukjuak Inuit were completely satisfied with their lives at Inukjuak and had all the equipment necessary to make a good living. Anna Nungaq does not remember ever being hungry in Inukjuak. Elijah Nutaraq said that they were well equipped, led a secure life and never experienced hunger.

I do not remember ever experiencing hunger and our extended family was able to catch lots of foxes and so were able to support the families. ...So, we lived a secure life at that time, never having experienced hunger. They were well-equipped with dogs. ...In Inukjuak we were able to have a much larger variety of food and wildlife...³⁷

Jaybeddie Amagoalik said that Inukjuak is an area of plentiful wildlife. Jackoosie Iqaluk said that they had all the equipment required to make a living.

Early Experiences in the New Locations

Many of the relocatees spoke of the distress they experienced at the new locations, the lack of support they received from the government and the inadequacy of the trading store. The lack of trade goods and groceries at the store was a common complaint in relation to both the new communities. Considerable frustration was expressed by the Resolute Bay people because they

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 176-178.

³⁶ Monday, April 5, 1993, Tr., vol. 1, p. 38.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 75-76.

would have no idea of how much they earned when they did work, and there seemed to be no price on the goods at the trade store. At Grise Fiord, Samwillie Eliasialuk said that people could earn money but that there was nothing to buy. No credit was extended at the stores and there were no handouts. Family allowance and old age pensions were no longer being given to them, they said, after they left Inukjuak.

We thought we were going to be kept together as a group. I thought I was going to be living with Sarah [Amagoalik] and I was crying all the time. ...We were to be separated again and I was wondering how can I do this, I'm not capable of surviving on my own. We got to a place where there was absolutely nothing, no housing, no medical services... they just left us there and we saw the ship sailing away and we were just dumped in a place where there was absolutely nothing.³⁸

Anna Nungaq

They say there was plenty of food. There was nowhere to go shopping for food and when we ran out of supplies, if we ran out of flour in April, if we ran out of tea, the next time you would have tea would be in August. That is where they brought us, to a place where there was no store.³⁹

Samwillie Eliasialuk

We were never paid as such with money. We were never told how much we earned. ...there didn't seem to be any prices attached to the fox pelts that were sold. We didn't seem to have to pay for any of the trade goods that we were getting.⁴⁰

Simeonie Amagoalik

Samwillie Eliasialuk, Anna Nungaq and Elijah Nutaraq understood that the camp was located on the Lindstrom Peninsula so as not to constitute a burden on the Craig Harbour police post. The rcmp members treated good hunters well but scolded the poorer hunters. Simeonie Amagoalik said that the policeman at Resolute Bay was angry at people all the time. Jaybeddie Amaraulik said that the police always seemed to be angry with the Inukjuak Inuit but that the police acted a bit better toward him. Andrew Iqaluk said that the policeman treated the better hunters differently from the others who were scolded all the time.

We were commanded and ordered to go hunting. ...Those of us men were not treated equally. There were those who were more able. If an individual was more able than another individual, or was more competent, they are treated differently. Police treated us differently because

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 66-67.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 95-96.

⁴⁰ Wednesday, April 7, 1993, Tr., vol. 3, p. 426.

of this. He treated some people very badly, scolding them all the time, and then he did not scold others as much, so the police did not treat individuals equally.⁴¹

Strict rules were in place at Resolute Bay to restrict contact between the Inuit settlement and the air base.

Unfulfilled Expectations in the New Locations

The Inukjuak Inuit say that they were not experiencing extreme hunger at Inukjuak; they had a great variety of wildlife, although some have said that game was scarce around Inukjuak at that time. They were told that they would be better off and well fed in the High Arctic. They were not told of the disadvantages. The 1953 relocatees – such as Samwillie Eliasialuk, at Grise Fiord, and Simeonie Amagoalik, at Resolute Bay – have said that they were not impressed with the game when they arrived.

When I heard my mother and my father relating what they were told ...they were told they would be promised plentiful caribou in the new land and they were told they have the freedom to return back to their original homeland after two years, if they so desired. But what we found there when we got there was very, very different. We were told right off that, "You can only catch one caribou per year for your family. That's the regulation." Also, "You are not allowed to kill any musk-ox. You are liable to a \$5,000 fine or be arrested if you kill any musk-ox." My question is: Why did they even bother mentioning caribou and musk-ox and the plentifullness thereof when they were trying to recruit people.⁴²

Samwillie Eliasialuk

Although we were told there was going to be more plentiful wildlife up in the High Arctic, all we have been able to ascertain is that marine mammals, polar bear, seals, and walrus are more plentiful. That is true. But, even today, I cannot shoot any polar bear. ...Although we were told there were lots of caribou. My younger brother, Jaybeddie, we spent all winter, in two week stretches, looking for a place where there was caribou, and we got...only two caribou. That was all we found. After four years, when Jackoosie and his brother came, we were able to wander and explore farther and farther. So, only after four years we were able to find more caribou.⁴³

Simeonie Amagoalik

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 432-433.

⁴² Tr., vol. 1, p. 50.

⁴³ Tr., vol. 2, pp. 237-238.

It took them a long time to learn how to hunt the game available at the new locations because of the different conditions in the High Arctic. Later relocatees have said that there was good game in the High Arctic once people learned how to hunt for it. Andrew Iqaluk said that when he arrived at Resolute Bay in 1955, caribou had just become available for hunting but he had to search out the areas where he could hunt successfully. Jackoosie Iqaluk said that foxes were plentiful at Resolute Bay in the winter of 1955-56. The relocatees do speak of having experienced extreme hunger in the High Arctic. Samwillie Eliasialuk said that he did not know extreme hunger when he was growing up but he did experience extreme hunger when he moved to the High Arctic. Simeonie Amagoalik, as well as others, said that they were forced to live off the garbage of the white man. Sarah Amagoalik said that the first year was very difficult and that she almost starved to death. Rynie Flaherty spoke of how her son almost starved.

The Motivation for Going

The younger hunters were excited about going to the High Arctic in light of the promise of plenty of large animals. Lazarusie Epoo liked everything he was told about the plentiful wildlife in the new land but was prevented from going by his parents.

I was in my prime in those days and I was very competent in the matter of going after animals and wildlife, whichever species they may have been. I myself was absolutely ready to go on the relocation project because we were told or informed that there were lots of wildlife and lots of animals in the new land and according to what I heard I liked everything that I heard because they gave us a very good description.⁴⁴

I myself was not a mature adult at the time, but I know that adults among us were giving deep thought to this whole project and there were families that were split, wrenched apart by the whole thing at the time of the relocation. Some of them, direct family relations, were torn apart right at that time. But they were doing it on the basis of trying to make improvements, to improve the future and their circumstances of living. Some refused to go on the basis of their elder's decision not to go. ...Some of them refused because they felt that they were able to make a living without going through the relocation. The adults...who left for the relocation...based their understanding on a better future. A better future was on their minds and it was to be an experiment which they could try out for two years.⁴⁵

Elijah Nutaraq said that he was very young, without a care in the world, and went to the High Arctic with mental images of a promised land. Jaybeddie

⁴⁴Tr., vol. 1, pp. 78-79.

⁴⁵Tr., vol. 4, pp. 523-524.

Amaraulik said he agreed to go readily because he thought he could live off fox and polar bear pelts. Simon Akpaliapik was persuaded to go by the promise of caribou and lots of other game. Jackoosie Iqaluk thought that his relatives had gone to a land of plenty and that it was going to be fun to join them. Minnie Allakariallak, who was 13 at the time, recalls being quite happy at the prospect of relocating:

I was, myself, quite happy, because...I was expecting to go to a much more pleasant place, and I don't think I actually cried, and I don't think I really cried, even though my mother was weeping and crying at our departure. Here we were, travelling on the ship, I was actually looking forward to being on the ship...⁴⁶

Minnie Allakariallak

Some people, including Anna Nungaq and Andrew Iqaluk, went because their elders had decided to go. Some, such as Minnie Allakariallak, Samwillie Eliasialuk, Simeonie Amagoalik and Andrew Iqaluk, felt that there was no choice but to go because this is what the government wanted. Their sense was that the proposal was something the government considered a good thing and something the government wanted.

The RCMP...came to us and they told us that we had to leave, "You have to leave to another community. The government wants you to move." Since they were telling us this and they were policemen, when the Qallunaat or white men spoke, we were afraid of them...⁴⁷

I myself was newly married at the time and the police told me that my brothers-in-law would probably agree to go to the High Arctic if I myself would agree to do so and my mother-in-law, Minnie, sort of pushed me on. I myself had questions in my own mind about why do we have to do this, but this was being said by a policeman, who was armed, an armed policeman, an armed policeman in those days you don't argue with very much. In those days, we did not have councils or municipalities and it was thought in those days that the white man was all powerful, next to God, actually, and you don't argue with him if he insists on something.⁴⁸

Simeonie Amagoalik

When we were still back in our original community, we did not initiate any move to be moved out of there. This was imposed upon us.⁴⁹

Samwillie Eliasialuk

⁴⁶ Tr., vol. 2, pp. 212-213.

⁴⁷ Tr., vol. 1, p. 37.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 55-56.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

My mother was asked about the relocation, but my younger brother and I were never asked or consulted because we were following the advice and decisions of our elders at that time. ...I have since considered this and reflected on this and determined that the elders were broken in spirit and were finally convinced upon the strong insistence, even when their lives were going to be adversely affected...⁵⁰

Andrew Iqaluk

Information About the New Locations

Some of the relocatees received more information than others. Only some of the relocatees were spoken to directly by the RCMP or other officials. Some remember that the RCMP member used a very good interpreter from the Hudson's Bay Company. Others remember what they were told by one of the Inuit special constables, who was not such a good interpreter. Minnie Allakariallak says that the police did not tell them about the disadvantages and told them only that seals and walrus were plentiful.

...the police started coming and they started being quite insistent that we should agree to relocate to an area that had plenty of wildlife. They never told us the disadvantages. They never told us about the extended periods of darkness. They never told us about the lack of vegetation up in the High Arctic. They only told us there is lots of seals and lots of walrus.⁵¹

Lazarusie Epoo recalls the events in these terms:

We were told that it was cold, but it was going to be a place where we could make a go of life. It was to be somewhat better than conditions in Inukjuak.⁵²

Anna Nungaq was not spoken to by the police and was not told that they were going to a far away place that was dark for many months. Minnie Killiktee describes her reaction when told that it would be dark all winter:

When I first became aware that it was all dark all winter, I thought I was going to sleep all winter and get up only in the summer. That was the mental image I had upon hearing that these were the conditions.⁵³

Jaybeddie Amaraulik asked someone on the ship for information, and the possibility of using abandoned buildings for housing at Resolute Bay was mentioned; this turned out not to be the case, however. The months of total darkness in the

⁵⁰ Tr., vol. 3, pp. 427 and 429.

⁵¹ Tr., vol. 1, p. 85.

⁵² Tr., vol. 4, p. 523.

⁵³ Tr., vol. 2, p. 213.

High Arctic made performing the ordinary tasks of living very difficult and had a depressing effect on the Inukjuak Inuit who had not experienced this before.

The Promise to Return to Inukjuak

Those who were relocated were told that they would be free to return, but this promise was broken. The relocatees have said that some people raised the issue of a return directly and were turned down flat or were discouraged from returning. Other people wondered when the government would tell them they could go home. They were told to have their relatives from Inukjuak join them. Minnie Allakariallak remembers that they were told they could go home after two years. After two years her husband asked when they would go home and the elders were asking if the officials had told them yet when they would be going home.

Samwillie Eliasialuk was told by his parents about the promise to return, but when his parents tried to make the case for returning, they were refused outright. The police discouraged others from returning and instigated bringing relatives to the High Arctic.

When we were still in the High Arctic and our parents attempted to make the case for returning, they were told outright that there's no possible way for them to ever go back and in fact some government official said, "If you want to return, you are going to have to find other people to take your place before we allow you to go back." This was said by people where no appeal was available to a higher authority.⁵⁴

I would like to talk about Josephie Flaherty. In 1959-60...Josephie said that when he went to request a return to his original homeland, he was given the following reasons for refusing his request. There will be an establishment of a school, so you shouldn't return to your original home community. You have lots of children and there will be education for them now. That is what he was told.⁵⁵

Simeonie Amagoalik said the police promised that they would be free to return after two years but, after the first year, a request to return was turned down. They were told that it would be better for their relatives to join them in the High Arctic. The police then told their relatives in Inukjuak that the Inuit in the High Arctic wanted them to come up there.

...when the police came...they said "You are going to return. You have the freedom to return after two years if you so desire." So after the first year, or even before the whole year was up, by springtime, one of my brothers-in-law went to the police and said: "Look my two years are not up, but I would like to return" and right away he was turned

⁵⁴ Tr., vol. 1, p. 51.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

down. When the annual supply ship came, we were gathered outside by the government officials and we asked them: "Are we going to have to wait another year because you told us previously we could return after two years? Do we have to finish those two years or can we return now?" And the federal officials said this to us: "Perhaps it would be better if you could just ask your extended family to come up, invite them up to the High Arctic instead."⁵⁶

Lazarusie Epoo and Anna Nungaq speak of how people were discouraged from returning. John Amagoalik remembers that his father extracted a promise to return from the police but now he knows the government never had any intention of honouring the promise.

The Impact of the Relocation

The relocation had an immediate impact on some people and a longer-term impact on others, leading to depression and despondency. Family relationships were disrupted in various ways. Families were broken up as a result of the initial departure from Inukjuak. There was further disruption when the families were unexpectedly separated onto different ships and sent to different places. These separations continued for years and were compounded by the departure of people to hospitals in the south for treatment of tuberculosis. Young people had great difficulty finding spouses. The impact of the relocation was felt not only by those who were adults at the time but also by the children and those born in the High Arctic. For example, Larry Audlaluk spoke of the hardships they experienced in the early years and the effects on his father and his family of the government's broken promises.

...I used to listen to my mother in times of despair asking questions to no one in particular: "Where are all the animals that they were promised? Where are the animals? Where are the fish?" ... She got so tired of eating seal meat. I remember her cooking dead dog, and another time I remember her cooking – we don't usually eat wolf, but I remember her having wolf...⁵⁷

Martha Flaherty speaks of how the relocation ruined the lives of the relocatees. John Amagoalik recalls promises made but not kept and remembers the first ten years as terrible ones:

The first ten years in Resolute were the most terrible years of our lives. We spent years without mothers, without fathers, without brothers, without sisters, who were all sick in the hospital; in southern hospitals.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

⁵⁷ Tr., vol. 2, p. 235.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 198.

I remember the men being out for months...and the women and children were left alone in the community to fend for themselves. I remember my parents always yearning for food. They were crying for fish, berries, game birds, and things that were just not available up there. ...it is also very important for people to understand the complete and utter isolation that we experienced. We were completely cut off from the world for the first three or four years; no way of communicating with our families and friends back home.⁵⁹

Markoosie Patsauq says that he had tuberculosis when he was relocated and should have been hospitalized. Instead he was relocated and infected many other people who had to be hospitalized, which increased the suffering in the new communities. He and others who later returned to Inukjuak left behind much equipment in the High Arctic. Dora Pudluk speaks of the hardship she and her family experienced, including the additional pain of separation when some family members returned to Inukjuak.

I just wanted to make a supplementary [comment] to what I said earlier today. I felt a little emotional at the time and I can finish it. I just wanted to mention how I related to my parents who went through hardship because of the relocation that took place. They went through hardship when some of their relatives had to go to a hospital and when they came back to their own homeland, they went through more difficulty and they would think about the ones that they left behind and they go through another emotional problem. All these combine. It seems that the government was not very well prepared when they sent us up. ... when one sees the mother and father go through hardship, it affects the whole family members, especially the children.⁶⁰

Lizzie Amagoalik recalls how the police persuaded her father to go to the High Arctic with promises of a better life and the freedom to return without talking about the harsh conditions; how her father's life fell apart after the relocation; how her father wanted to return and was told it was too expensive for him to go and see his relatives in Inukjuak; the hardships experienced in the High Arctic and the hardships experienced after they returned to Inukjuak.

Now, my father after he was notified in 1953, his life changed. As my mother has stated, my grandfather didn't want to go so we stayed behind. Now in 1955 when he was told again he was told, "Johnny, Simeonie and Jaybeddie and your daughter, have a very good place to stay now. They want you to come, so you will go. When it come July you will go." He was told and he answered, "Is there another place where it's better?" ...When he said this...[the police officer] blushed. "There's lots of country food and you will not be hungry, your dogs will have plenty to eat, so you will go up." When he was told this, he

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 201-202.

⁶⁰ Tr., vol. 3, pp. 505-506.

went inside the tent and put his head down. ...my father he wanted to ask more questions but he was told "No, you cannot." He was given a wonderful description of the new land and he never answered or responded thereafter. ...inside he was already very hurt and I knew that ...Starting from 1953 my father's life started breaking apart. I observed it with my own eyes. ...Then when we were on the ship... he said "I want to go home." ...All the time we were trying to get used to the new land, he always asked the police, "When are we going home? When are we going home?" ...Then...he heard about the death of his older brother in Inukjuak. He went to see the police requesting that he be allowed to go and see his family back in Inukjuak. Because it was expensive, he was told that "it's too expensive for you to go," so he just simply slumped down in the bed and his life was deteriorating, he falling apart.⁶¹

Minnie Killiktee and Lizzie Amagoalik had begun school at Inukjuak and missed the fact that there was no school in the High Arctic.

When people did begin to return to Inukjuak in the 1970s and 1980s, they left children and other relatives in the High Arctic, adding to the suffering caused when families were separated. People who returned to Inukjuak left many things – boats, snow mobiles, household appliances, etc. behind in the High Arctic. Rebuilding lives and relationships in Inukjuak has been difficult. The Inukjuak community was not prepared for the return of the relocatees.

...when they eventually returned they came back with no more than a suitcase in their hands – nothing more than a suitcase. They left behind all of their essential belongings. They came back with only one suitcase. ...Some of them came back under these circumstances, not all of them, but some of them. ...We [at Inukjuak] had to tackle these problems because many people who returned had absolutely nothing because they couldn't bring their essential equipment. ...It seems that the government was totally ignorant, totally unaware of the circumstances of these people. But we from Inukjuak informed the government about the conditions of these people, that they should get help. We ourselves were not equipped or resourced to help these people because all we had were barely enough resources to look after the local people. We were not given any extra resources whatsoever to deal with the problems associated with the returnees. The relocation has many problems associated for both the relocatees themselves and for the people they left behind.⁶²

Lazarusie Epoo

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 395-398, 401, 405.

⁶² Tr., vol. 4, pp. 532-534.

An Enduring Impact

All of the relocatees communicate a deep sense of hurt and loss as a result of the relocation. The suffering affects not only those who were adults or young adults at the time of the relocation but also those who grew up in the new communities. Susan Salluvnik, for example, speaks of the effects on those who were children at the time:

We are the caretakers of the pains of our parents, of the pains of our mothers and fathers, in the separations of the families in the move to Resolute and Grise Fiord. ...this is quite a burden to have to carry, with the responsibility to search out relatives. We have to really search out the relatives and figure out our family relationships and roots.⁶³

The northern Quebec relocatees see themselves as exiles. Zebedee Nungak, Vice-President of Makivik Corporation, notes that the consciousness of the High Arctic exiles began to rise at the same time as the political consciousness of Inuit across the Canadian Arctic began to rise. As more and more of the younger relocatees began to receive formal education, Inuit raised more and more questions about the belief of the relocatees that they were treated unjustly and were coerced into relocating. Why were the people relocated? What promises were made by government officials and why were they not kept? Was it fair for the relocatees to be coerced? The organizational and legal support that the relocatees have needed to advance their claim for justice has been provided by democratically elected representative organizations like the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada and its regional affiliate in northern Quebec, Makivik Corporation.

The Continuing Pursuit of Justice

The relocatees have found that the House of Commons Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Professor Soberman, who was appointed by the Canadian Human Rights Commission, recognized the truth of their story and made recommendations to redress the injustice. They now find their pursuit of justice frustrated, however; the relocatees see the government's response being to hire consultants to write "whitewashes" and to refuse to act on recommendations for an apology and compensation. The result has been to exacerbate the grievances.

Conclusion

The Inukjuak Inuit have said they found the relocation difficult. They experienced a sense of isolation, feelings of loneliness, and a great need to go home and see kin. Some felt their lives lost meaning. They went believing that they would

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 624.

have a better life than they had at Inukjuak. Some were excited about what they were told about the abundant game, particularly the large land mammals. Some went because their elders went. Others felt they had to go because that was what the government wanted. Their expectations were not fulfilled. They found an environment that was very different from Inukjuak and conditions that were not better. They arrived without all the equipment they needed. Supplies at the trade store were inadequate. They experienced periods of extreme hunger and cold. Some state that family allowances and old age pensions were cut off. Young people had difficulty finding spouses. They were told that they would be taken home if they wished but this promise was not honoured. The effects of the relocation were prolonged, both for those in the High Arctic and for those at Inukjuak. Some relocatees also speak about a loss of freedom in the new communities, with the police ordering people about and scolding them. The return to Inukjuak has also been hard because of the long separation, because people left many belongings behind, and because the Inukjuak community lacked the resources to look after the returnees.

The Pond Inlet relocatees believed they would be compensated but they were not. Some of them found the lack of store supplies to be hard. Life in the new communities was made additionally difficult because the two groups from Pond Inlet and Inukjuak did not get along very well, as a result of linguistic and cultural differences, but also because the Inukjuak Inuit had been portrayed as welfare cases when the Pond Inlet Inuit were being recruited.

Eskimo Administration: The Relocation Scheme in Historical Perspective

The relocation took place against a background of many years of government administration of what was then called ‘Eskimo affairs’.

The period of the relocation has been characterized as a time when administrators “struggled manfully and humanely without any real rudder”.⁶⁴ Diubaldo shows that the policies and practices of the early 1950s have roots in practices and attitudes of much earlier years. The early 1950s was a time of great activity, a rush to make up for past neglect, and at times proposals were put forward with the attitude of “why not” and “let’s give it a try”.⁶⁵ The prevailing attitude was paternalistic – the just, strict Victorian father who knows best what

⁶⁴ Diubaldo, p. 107. Jenness’s study, “Eskimo Administration”, characterizes the period as a time when the administration was “steering without a compass” by which he meant to convey that anyone navigating a ship without a compass would inevitably hit a reef. The Gunther report uses both Diubaldo and Jenness to provide some brief historical background, but the pattern of institutional attitudes that continued into the 1950s and the significance of that pattern for the relocation does not emerge from the Gunther report. Nor does the Gunther report clearly situate the Inukjuak Inuit of the early 1950s against the background of decades of change brought about by non-Inuit activities in the Arctic.

⁶⁵ Diubaldo, p. 130, referring specifically to agricultural experiments but in terms that are echoed in the contemporary comments of Mr. Sivertz in a May 18, 1993 letter to the Commission. In that letter, Sivertz refers to the discussions he had with Messrs. Cantley and Stevenson about why the Inuit had not stayed at settlements whose remains had been found in the High Arctic. He refers to a suggestion being made that a relocation with modern amenities – coal oil lamps and flashlights – might be more successful. He recalls his reaction at the time as “Why don’t we try it?”. It can be noted that the very basic supplies ordered for the trading stores at the new communities would include only a small number of lamps and flashlights.

is good for his charges, despite sometimes painful consequences.⁶⁶ The rush to make up for years of neglect has been seen to be “perhaps equally harmful”.⁶⁷

Early Non-Inuit Contacts with Inuit

The intrusion of non-Inuit economic influences into the Arctic dates back into the last century with the arrival of whalers in some parts of the Arctic. The impact on the traditional hunting way of life increased in the early decades of the twentieth century with the spread of the fur trade; the result, in many parts of the Arctic, was that the Inuit economy included significant dependence on barter in furs. Inuit were encouraged to live near trading posts and to bring in furs in exchange for the goods, including the store food, that trading could provide. Downturns in the fur trade could cause hardship to Inuit who had become used to that way of life.⁶⁸

Traders spread out over the Arctic in the early decades of the century, with missionaries and the police following. Revillon Frères operated a trading post at Inukjuak from 1909 until 1936 when the Hudson’s Bay Company bought out Revillon Frères. From 1920 the Hudson’s Bay Company had its own post at Port Harrison, which competed with Revillon Frères and later with a post operated by the Baffin Trading Company from 1939 to 1949. It is likely that the Inuit of the Inukjuak area had had some contact with traders operating out of the Hudson’s Bay Company post at Great Whale River, first opened in 1756. The post was closed and re-opened several times during the next 100 years but operated continually after 1852. The Company had also operated a post at Fort Chimo since 1866. The use of guns had replaced traditional methods of hunting at Inukjuak by 1925.⁶⁹

The Inukjuak Inuit first came into contact with Christianity through the Anglican Reverend E. J. Peck who established a mission at Little Whale River in 1876. He journeyed up the coast and inland as far as Ungava Bay and also transcribed into syllabics parts of the New Testament. An Anglican mission was established at Inukjuak in 1927. The Inuit name for the area, Inukjuak, means a place of many people, and the area had supported a large number of Inuit for hundreds of years.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 126, 137, 163.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

⁶⁸ Both Diubaldo and Jenness review this early period of Canadian Arctic history in some detail. Jenness was writing about events in which he was involved. Diubaldo wrote many years later from the perspective of a scholar. Both provide an extensive survey of events in the first 60 years of this century. Willmott provides a contemporary survey of conditions at Inukjuak.

⁶⁹ Jenness, pp. 8-14; Diubaldo, pp. 12-14; Willmott, pp. 1-3.

⁷⁰ Willmott, pp. 1-3.

The RCMP established a post at Inukjuak in 1935 but closed it three years later. The post was re-opened in 1945. The Department of Transport established a facility at Inukjuak in 1935 as well. This was a radio transmitter to assist the growing marine traffic in the area. In 1943, the Department of Transport also established a weather facility.⁷¹

In the early decades of this century, the well-being of the Inuit was left to the traders and missionaries. Government action was preoccupied with the maintenance of sovereignty. It was only after the intense criticism, some of it international, resulting from the great opening of the North in the Second World War and the post-war period that the government began significantly to remedy years of neglect in health care, education, and general welfare.⁷² So it was in 1947 that a nursing station was established at Inukjuak. A school followed in 1950, with construction of the necessary buildings in 1951.⁷³

The non-Inuit operations in Inukjuak required Inuit to act as translators, special constables, handymen, and general helpers. By 1958, for example, 13 households comprising 70 Inuit depended on the full-time employment offered by the trading and police posts, missions, Department of Transport facilities, school, and nursing station.

Diseases brought into the Arctic by non-Inuit had devastating effects. Epidemics frequently followed visits by non-Inuit. By 1930, Canada's Western Arctic population was estimated to have fallen to about 200 from the 2,000 who had inhabited the region a century earlier.⁷⁴ Year after year, government bulletins announced to the public that Canada's Inuit were in good health. The reality was that during the 1920s and '30s "the health care of the Inuit, particularly in the Eastern Arctic was in a shambles."⁷⁵ Mortality in every district of the Arctic was abnormally high and the population, if not stable, was decreasing rather than increasing.⁷⁶ The Eastern Arctic Patrol received a false impression of the conditions of the Inuit that "bordered on the theatrical" as the traders directed the Inuit to dress in their best clothes – borrowing clothes from others if necessary – and to paint and clean. The concern of the Patrol was to "save our face".⁷⁷

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² Diubaldo, pp. 14, 15, 30-35, 54, 89-106. Diubaldo notes that O.S. Finnie, the first Director of the Northwest Territories Branch of the Department of the Interior, considered that Canada was, in the 1920s, shamefully neglecting its responsibilities to the Inuit.

⁷³ Willmott, pp. 1-3; Jenness, p. 79.

⁷⁴ Jenness, p. 14.

⁷⁵ Diubaldo, pp. 93 and 94.

⁷⁶ Jenness, pp. 46 and 47.

⁷⁷ Diubaldo, p. 99, quoting from a contemporary source.

Single epidemics could claim 25 per cent of a community. Medical care was not given to the dying – they were turned away if they could get to a medical centre or were turned out to die in a snow house or tent if already in one of the few treatment centres.⁷⁸ In the period from 1937 to 1941, the mortality rates for Inuit were many times those for Canada as a whole, “a staggering eleven hundred per one hundred thousand.”⁷⁹ Canada was embarrassed by public criticism flowing back through U.S. military personnel entering the Arctic during the Second World War, and it has been said that “If the whole truth had been made public, the Canadian Government, already stinging from embarrassment, would have had much to answer for.”⁸⁰

The effect of improved health care introduced after the Second World War was that the mortality rate began to decline and the Inuit population, by the mid- to late 1950s, began gradually to increase. Jenness puts the total Inuit population of the Canadian Arctic at 8,646 in 1951, increasing by just over 400, to 9,078, in 1957, but then increasing by almost 1,700, to 10,751, by 1960. This increase in population was a cause for concern, particularly in the late 1950s and the 1960s, since it would “severely tax the local resources in fish and game as well as the opportunities for wage employment”.⁸¹ Willmott reports that mortality rates at Inukjuak in the 1940s and early ’50s were so high that they cancelled out the birth rate, and he estimated that the population in the area was stable at 500 people throughout this period.⁸²

After the war a program of treating victims of tuberculosis in southern hospitals was also implemented. For decades, medical officers, RCMP members, missionaries and traders had argued against removing the Inuit from their surroundings and continued to do so. These arguments did not prevail in the face of the cost-effectiveness of using existing hospitals and expertise and the difficulty of persuading medical experts to go north.⁸³ This program, while doing much to improve physical health, had a crushing effect on the morale of those affected by it. Very few tubercular Inuit in that period left their homes willingly, although the great majority went in silence, offering no resistance, and their relatives stood silently by and watched them depart without tears to an unknown country from which

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

⁸¹ Jenness, p. 148.

⁸² Willmott, pp. 10-17, 110-112. Although Gunther emphasizes population as a cause for concern and refers to both Jenness and Willmott in other respects, his report does not discuss the relationship between high mortality rates and population generally or with respect to the population centred at Inukjuak.

⁸³ Diubaldo, p. 105.

some of them never returned. A number of families, however, deliberately kept away from any settlement when the hospital ship was due to make its annual call.⁸⁴

The Administration's Approach to Inuit Well-Being

For four decades, into the 1950s, the view of the administration was that the Inuit should remain self-sufficient hunters and trappers.⁸⁵ During this period, there was concern about whether game resources were adequate to support the Inuit population. There was concern that the introduction of guns had led to over-hunting and increased waste of animals that were shot but not recovered. There was also a concern that migratory patterns were being disrupted.⁸⁶ The Inuit of the east coast of Hudson Bay were seen as being the worst off. It was observed in the 1920s that caribou were disappearing from the Labrador Peninsula, and there was a concern that marine mammals were also in decline. By 1930 most Inuit in this area had ceased to make clothing entirely from caribou hides, partly from choice but mainly as a result of the scarcity of caribou. Cloth garments represented a significant portion of the clothing requirement. Starvation was a continuing concern. Life in the Arctic was precarious for people living on the land. If game failed to materialize, or if weather and ice conditions prevented hunting for an extended period, people could and did starve to death. There were incidents of starvation, and in the mid-1930s, dried buffalo meat, buffalo hides and surplus caribou skins from other areas were distributed to people in the Eastern Arctic.⁸⁷

The concern for maintaining the game resources of the Arctic led to a recommendation by O.S. Finnie, Director of the Northwest Territories Branch, to establish a game preserve where only Aboriginal people might hunt and trap. In 1926, the game preserve was extended to cover all of Canada's Arctic Islands, even though most of the Arctic Islands were uninhabited and remain so. In addition to the conservation objectives, the creation of the Arctic Islands Game Preserve also contributed to the maintenance of Canadian sovereignty in the area. Trading companies would, as the Department of External Affairs observed in 1929, require government consent and approval to establish posts in the area, and

The creation of this preserve and its appearance on our maps serves to notify the world that the area between the 60th and 141st meridians right up to the Pole is under Canadian sovereignty.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ Jenness, pp. 87-88.

⁸⁵ Diubaldo, p. 54; Jenness, p. 32.

⁸⁶ Diubaldo, pp. 60-61.

⁸⁷ Jenness, pp. 39, 51-52; Diubaldo, pp. 37, 70-75.

⁸⁸ External Affairs, "The Question of Ownership of the Sverdrup Islands", October 28, 1929, p. 10,

Trading posts required a licence, and transient trading posts were prohibited. As a result, the government controlled both the number and the locations of permanent trading posts.

The Importance of Trapping and the Organization of Relief

For many years, trapping was profitable. Some Inuit, in the Western Arctic, enjoyed great prosperity. In 1914, the price paid for white fox was \$15 and, during the 1920s, the price never went below \$30. Prices reached their peak around 1929, when a white fox skin was valued at between \$50 and \$60. Prices fell to \$30 in 1930 and continued to fall to \$8 in 1934. The situation was very difficult for Inuit who had come to depend on trapping for a significant part of their living. Income from trapping was always cyclical. The white fox population was on a four-year cycle with every fourth year a peak year. However, during the Great Depression, the bottom fell out of the market. When trapping income dropped dramatically, the trappers could not obtain the trade goods and store food to which they had become accustomed. Inuit who had become increasingly dependent on the fur trade, and so on the trading post, would find themselves in need of relief in bad fur years. The demand for relief increased sharply in the 1930s, particularly in the Central and Eastern Arctic.

Government relief was administered, where there was a medical officer, by the medical officer and, where there was an RCMP post, by the RCMP. If there was neither a medical officer nor a police post, relief would be administered by the manager of the trading post. Where a trading company, such as the Hudson's Bay Company, enjoyed a monopoly of trade, there was no government relief; it was the responsibility of the company to provide relief. Relief amounted to food and clothing but, wherever possible, it was issued in the form of ammunition, "so that the natives will be encouraged to get out and shift for themselves which they are quite willing to do.... [T]he Eskimos are a very fine race of people and care is being exercised in the distribution of relief so that indolence may not be encouraged nor their sense of self-dependence unduly weakened."⁸⁹ The object was to prevent undue suffering without undermining Inuit self-reliance. The priority was to have the Inuit hunt so, wherever possible, ammunition for hunting would be issued instead of relief food or clothing. The Inuit were not to depend on the stores for support, and congregating or loitering at trading posts was prohibited. Economy was the watchword. Relief and related costs would be kept to the minimum. The Inuit were not to be spoiled.⁹⁰ Administrators

National Archives of Canada, RG85, vol. 347, file 200-2; as quoted by Grant in the materials provided to the Commission to supplement her oral presentation.

⁸⁹ Jenness, p. 53, quoting from W. C. Bethune, "Canada's Eastern Arctic, its History, Resources, Population and Administration" (Ottawa: Department of the Interior, 1935), pp. 57-58.

⁹⁰ Diubaldo, pp. 70-75.

perceived that Inuit who continued to live more closely in their traditional way, without heavy reliance on the trade store, were healthier, both physically and mentally.⁹¹ Dr. Frederick Banting, on a 1928 tour of the Eastern Arctic, had recommended that the policy be to “keep the native, native”. It was also seen that, in areas that were richer in food game resources, relief costs were lower in poor fur years than in other areas of the Arctic.⁹² As a result, hunting was seen as a way of preserving the physical and mental well-being of the Inuit as well as reducing relief costs. The concern for minimizing relief and encouraging self-reliance through hunting also emerges in the 1953 relocation.

The 1934 High Arctic Relocation

It was against the background of the collapse of fur prices and increasing relief that the Department of the Interior authorized the establishment by the Hudson's Bay Company of a post at Dundas Harbour on Devon Island in the High Arctic. The approval of the Department required the Company to assume full responsibility for the welfare of the families the Company proposed to transfer to Devon Island from Cape Dorset on southern Baffin Island in 1934; in the event the Company closed its post, the Company was responsible for returning the people to their homes at its own expense or for transferring them to such other trapping grounds as the Department might designate. The Northwest Territories Council saw this as an experiment with a view to a general plan of northern migration and settlement where game was abundant. The future of Inuit independence was seen to depend on the success of the relocation.⁹³ A similar sense of an experiment, with a view to further High Arctic settlements in the interest of preserving Inuit independence through hunting, infused the 1953 relocation decision.

The government issued a press release describing the various objectives of the 1934 relocation, which included the following:

In addition to placing the Eskimos in new regions where game is more abundant and work more regular, there is the angle of occupation of the country, now that aerial routes, mineral developments, and other reasons make possible the claims of other countries to part of Canada's Arctic, which now reaches to the North Pole. To forestall any such future claims, the Dominion is occupying the Arctic islands to within nearly 700 miles of the North Pole.⁹⁴

⁹¹ Jenness, p. 39, referring to a 1927 report by Burwash on the health of the Inuit along the east coast of Hudson Bay.

⁹² Diubaldo, pp. 70-75.

⁹³ Jenness, pp. 56-47; Diubaldo, pp. 118, 127.

⁹⁴ Jenness, p. 58.

The press release indicated that the relocated Inuit would have some opportunity for work in the new location. “There are no posts in the northland without Eskimo helpers.”⁹⁵ The work described in the press release were the “chores” of guiding water patrols and foot hunting for men and sewing and cooking for women.

The 1934 relocation to Dundas Harbour is remarkable for the distances involved and for the express government sanction given to the relocation. It was not, however, an isolated incident. The whalers had relocated both Eastern and Western Arctic Inuit to work at whaling stations.⁹⁶ A.P. Low, reporting after the 1903-1904 voyage of the *D.G.S. Neptune*, recommended that “some regulation should be made to prevent this unauthorized movement of the natives...”⁹⁷ The traders also relocated Inuit to live near trading posts and then to trap in areas designated by the traders “without their consent but in the face of as strenuous a protest as an Eskimo, with his fear of the trader, dared to make.” Very early on this practice was considered objectionable by some, and it was believed that, in any government policy, the “freedom of the native to follow their own desires should of course be guaranteed.”⁹⁸

The northward migration that the government hoped to spearhead with the 1934 relocation to Dundas Harbour led to other government-sponsored relocations. The Eastern Arctic Patrol was involved in relocating Inuit. The report of the 1940 Eastern Arctic Patrol stated as follows:

The migration northwards of Eskimo families inaugurated in 1934 has been a success and continues to be popular. Twenty-nine men, women and children migrated from Frobisher Bay to River Clyde, fifteen from Cape Dorset to Arctic Bay, while thirty-eight were transported on the “Nascopie” to hospitals or to join relatives in more favourable hunting areas.⁹⁹

The alleged ‘success’ of the 1934 relocation is, as discussed earlier, debatable. So too is the ‘voluntariness’ of these relocations. Indeed, there is no reason to believe that the desires and aspirations of the Inuit were taken into account.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, quoting from the government press release.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 11; Diubaldo, pp. 10-12. This is apart from takings and kidnappings, particularly of women. The first Inuit words to describe non-Inuit included a word that meant kidnapper of women.

⁹⁷ Jenness, p. 11, quoting from Low, 1906, p. 138.

⁹⁸ Diubaldo, p. 63, quoting from an October 30, 1924 memorandum from L.T. Burwash to O.S. Finnie, Director of the Northwest Territories Branch of the Department of the Interior.

⁹⁹ RG85, vol. 64; document provided by Grant and in turn obtained by her from M.A. Van Meehen.

¹⁰⁰ See, for example, Jenness, p. 63.

Jenness expressed doubt that a tiny colony established in the High Arctic could remain contented and energetic in such isolation for long. He considered that such a movement required, for its success, training of the Inuit and the maintenance of close contact with the world to the south. This would require significant commitment of resources to provide the isolated community with the necessary logistic support. This kind of commitment was not forthcoming from an administration that was preoccupied by encouraging the Inuit “to make more use of the wildlife resources available in their homelands and continue to follow the manner of life of their ancestors.”¹⁰¹

The Legal Status of Inuit

Administrators were working without clear guidance about the legal status and rights of Inuit and the correlative responsibilities and duties of the government to the Inuit. In the early 1920s, the Northwest Territories Branch assumed that Inuit were wards of the federal government in the same way as Indians. However, a bill introduced in Parliament in 1924 to bring Inuit under the *Indian Act* was opposed by the opposition, who objected “to degrading them into wards of the nation: Canada had signed no treaties with them, and should leave them alone, giving them the benefits of her Civil Law and compelling them to comply with her Criminal Law.”¹⁰² At the same time, the fact was that the Inuit did not participate in Canadian life on an equal footing with non-Inuit.

In the 1930s, a dispute between the federal government and the government of Quebec about responsibility for the cost of relief led to a reference to the Supreme Court of Canada. It was Quebec’s position that Inuit fell into the same constitutional category as Indians and were consequently the legislative responsibility of the federal government. In 1939, the Supreme Court ruled that Inuit were Indians for purposes of the division of constitutional authority between the federal and provincial governments.¹⁰³ The clear implication of the Supreme Court decision was that the government stood in a fiduciary relationship to the Inuit and owed them corresponding fiduciary duties. However, confusion about where Inuit fit in the administrative scheme and what the government’s responsibilities were continued for years, into the early 1950s.¹⁰⁴ On one hand, it was recognized by some that the Inuit did not participate in Canadian society on an equal footing and that their circumstances required special consideration and

¹⁰¹ Jenness, p. 63.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 32; Diubaldo, pp. 33-34; the quotation is from a speech by the Opposition Leader, Arthur Meighen.

¹⁰³ *Re Eskimo*, [1939] S.C.R. 104.

¹⁰⁴ Diubaldo, pp. 29, 48-52.

care. On the other hand, there was a view that Parliament had enacted no special legislation concerning the Inuit as it had with Indians, so that the Inuit had not been made wards of the state. In this view, therefore, they were to be treated in law as having the same legal capacity and rights as any other Canadian citizen, which was taken to imply that the government was to act toward the Inuit as it would act toward any other citizen. Administrative action equivocated between these two positions. As will be seen, equivocation is evident in the 1953-55 High Arctic relocation. The implications of the Supreme Court of Canada decision were not understood by the Department.

The Impact of the Second World War

The war brought dramatic change to some Eastern Arctic settlements. Airfields were built at Fort Chimo, Coral Harbour and Frobisher Bay. This was done in haste, with thousands of men descending on the communities to construct the airfields and large numbers of ships to supply the bases. Only a few Inuit were employed in unskilled or semi-skilled jobs, such as kitchen help and unloading cargo vessels, although around the Fort Chimo base, some found work as carpenters and truck drivers as well as general helpers. Fort Chimo attracted Inuit from as far away as Great Whale River. Those who enjoyed, for a few short years, substantial incomes working at the bases came quickly into conflict with those who continued with a modest hunting and trapping existence. Jenness describes some Inuit as becoming parasitical, scrounging food and collecting from the dumps. The waste and extravagance around these facilities was enormous. Jenness reports that the discontent brought about by the contrast with the amenities of non-Inuit society was deepened when the end of the war brought an end to employment. He reports that some Inuit adopted a fatalistic attitude that discouraged enterprise, a feeling that there was no need to worry since, if conditions became difficult, the non-Inuit possessed an abundance of everything and would provide for them.¹⁰⁵

Concerns in the Post-War Period

The concern that non-Inuit activities in the North were causing a decline of Inuit morale and self-reliance continued after the war. Various of the post-war social welfare programs were extended to the Arctic. Family allowance and old age security, for example, became payable to Inuit. These were provided in the form of store food and other goods from an approved list; it was not until 1960 that family allowances, for example, were paid in cash. Hudson's Bay Company traders believed that these 'handouts' from the government were

¹⁰⁵ Jenness, pp. 72-75.

...making ‘bums’ out of the majority of these natives. No person can keep his self-respect when his attitude is: ‘The more I get for nothing, the better’. ...our concern is for the natives. We would like to see them the strong, upright, hard-working, independent and prideful people they were before the white man brought his ‘blessings of civilization’ to them. To assume that goal, the native must be made to stand on his own feet and it is our personal idea that the present policy of too much help is killing him with kindness.¹⁰⁶

The Company’s concern was not academic; it was responsible for those who were unable to provide for themselves. In early 1949, the government agreed to accept responsibility for paying the relief costs of “inefficient trappers” – those whose average catch was fewer than ten foxes per year over the previous five years.¹⁰⁷ This decision was made in the face of more hard times for the fur trading economy. In 1948-49 white fox prices plummeted again to half their earlier value, and at one point in 1949-50, prices fell as low as \$3.50 from the 1948-49 average price of \$8.88.

Conclusion

Government decision making concerning the Inuit, for decades continuing into the early 1950s, typically did not take into account the wishes and aspirations of the Inuit. Instead, decisions reflected a paternalistic view of what would be good for the Inuit and tended to minimize or disregard Inuit wishes and desires. The High Arctic relocation can therefore be seen in the context of long-standing institutional attitudes, beliefs, and ways of doing things. The 1949 collapse of fur prices, concerns about declining Inuit morale, and a long-standing institutionalized belief in the desirability of maintaining the Inuit as independent hunters and trappers, together with decades of neglect by a parsimonious administration, set the stage for the decision to relocate Inukjuak Inuit to the High Arctic.

¹⁰⁶ Diubaldo, pp. 78-79, quoting from an October 11, 1948 memorandum from the post manager at Sugluk to the manager of the Ungava Section.

¹⁰⁷ Diubaldo, p. 79.

The Relocation Plan

Although the High Arctic relocation can be situated in the context of long-standing institutionalized attitudes and practices, the relocation took place for specific reasons. The government's response to the Standing Committee and the Gunther report, upon which the government response relied heavily, suggest that the relocation was necessary because the Inuit population in the Inukjuak area was outstripping the available game resources. The government insists that the intention was humane because the area could no longer sustain the population as a result of pressure on limited and severely fluctuating wildlife resources. The relocatees are equally insistent that they had a secure life at Inukjuak and that there was no need to move.

It is therefore necessary to review in some detail the events leading up to the relocation to disclose the true character of the plan. As will be seen, the government has mistakenly characterized the relocation. It will also be seen that misconceptions within government about the relocation emerged soon after the relocation, and these misconceptions persist to the present day.

The 1949 Collapse of Fur Prices and Discussion of the Problem in the Cantley Report

The decision to relocate Inuit from northern Quebec to the High Arctic had its direct roots in the 1949 collapse of fur prices. Inuit income was reduced to one-sixth of what it was in 1946, while the price of essential goods approximately

doubled. It was believed that relief costs would rise, "particularly in areas where country food is scarce and the natives depend on store food."¹⁰⁸

The Northwest Territories Council proposed that a study be made of Inuit economic conditions to investigate what steps might be taken to improve them. The economic problem flowed largely from the instability of the fur trade and the demand for relief in bad years. The measures to be investigated therefore involved addressing the income side of the issue through income support or diversification of the income economy. However, consideration was also to be given to reducing Inuit reliance on an income economy through increased reliance on hunting. With regard to the latter possibility, the Council wished the study to investigate

The feasibility of opening government-owned or co-operative stores at points rich in native food supplies which are not at present served by traders, owing to the local scarcity of white fox.¹⁰⁹

Implicit in this possibility is the relocation of Inuit to use that post and hunt in that area. The Council was thus pursuing practices that had been used in the past when economic conditions resulted in an increased demand for relief.

The Council was also concerned that the severe downturn in fur prices could drive traders, including the Hudson's Bay Company, out of the Arctic. Concern about maintaining the presence of the Hudson's Bay Company in the Arctic was not isolated from the relief issue, since the Company was responsible for looking after the Inuit in areas where it enjoyed a monopoly. The failure of independent traders, as occurred in 1949 with the Baffin Trading Company, would increase the area of monopoly enjoyed by the Hudson's Bay Company and hence increase the pressure on the Company to provide assistance to the Inuit in those areas. If the Company were to leave the Arctic, the government would be forced to fill the void; failure to do so could have disastrous results. For half a century, the government had relied on the traders to provide for the economic well-being of the Inuit. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Council wished the study of Inuit economic conditions to investigate

The possibility of some arrangement whereby the Hudson's Bay Company might continue in the picture with a degree of government supervision and assistance to accomplish desired results.¹¹⁰

The study, undertaken by James Cantley, produced a report with recommendations designed to increase government co-operation with the Hudson's Bay

¹⁰⁸ Northwest Territories Council minutes, N.W.T. Archives, G79-042 GC00 1/18; document provided by Grant.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

Company with “the minimum of interference from others not directly interested.”¹¹¹ The Cantley report recommended that responsibility for issuing family allowance, relief, old age security, etc. be transferred from the RCMP to the Hudson’s Bay Company and that provision be made “for the closest co-operation between Arctic Services and the Hudson’s Bay Company, both at administrative level and in the field, on all Arctic and Eskimo affairs.”¹¹²

These were the sum total of the Cantley’s recommendations. Starvation was not the overriding concern reflected in the proposal of the Northwest Territories Council to initiate the study Cantley conducted. Nor is starvation the focus of Cantley’s report.

The Gunther report, on which the government’s response to the Standing Committee was extensively based, draws on a passage from Diubaldo to situate the relocation in a context where “starvation had been endemic for decades” and where a relocation policy was a “major facet of the solution”.¹¹³ However, the Cantley report and the other documents discussed below do not support situating the relocation in such a context. With the passage of time, however, some government officials came to see the relocation as being justified in terms of potential famine in the Inukjuak area. It is therefore important to understand clearly the reasons for the relocation.

The Cantley report surveys the regional distribution and density of the Inuit population in relation to the land area of the various regions and the approximate miles of coastline of each region. The report states that “It is in new Quebec only that there is any immediate cause for concern regarding the size and density of the population. Almost 30 per cent of the Eskimo population of Canada is concentrated in this region which comprises only about 15 per cent of the total land area and 17 per cent of the coastline available to Eskimos.”¹¹⁴ The Cantley report observes that, if the Inuit were to live off the resources of the Arctic as they had for generations before the arrival of non-Inuit, it would be

¹¹¹ James Cantley, “Survey of Economic Conditions Among the Eskimos of the Canadian Arctic”, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development Library, p. 49. The first 42 pages were submitted to the Department in April 1951, with the remainder, under the heading “Review and Recommendations”, following in November 1951.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ Gunther, p. 247. Diubaldo was discussing the Henik Lake/Ennadai Lake relocation, which led to starvation and murder. His reference to starvation as a concern of the government is undoubtedly correct in broad terms, but his discussion of other relocations points to economic issues related to the instability of the fur trade as a major factor in some relocations, particularly the 1934 relocation to Dundas Harbour. Jenness also identifies an income problem related to fur prices as a major consideration in the 1934 relocation.

¹¹⁴ Cantley, p. 17.

necessary to distribute the Inuit in small communities over as wide an area as possible.¹¹⁵

The Gunther report, referring to Cantley's observations of population density and distribution and the capacity of the Arctic to support the Inuit as hunters, suggests that Cantley identified the problem in northern Quebec as one of over-population in relation to available resources. The solution was to distribute the population to other available, suitable places, where the Inuit could obtain a better living.¹¹⁶ At best, however, this is an over-simplification of the Cantley report. Determining what Cantley perceived to be the problem, the possible solutions and the factors affecting any solution requires a more extensive review of his report.

Cantley does discuss population distribution and density, but he immediately qualifies this information by noting that it was very general and that "any judgment based on geographic considerations and population records only, could be very misleading." The report makes it clear that no conclusions are being drawn directly from the population density information. Indeed, when discussing the situation at Aklavik, Cantley makes it clear that it is not population density, in itself, that is of concern but rather the basis for the economy in any particular part of the Arctic. Cantley considered that the Inuit of Quebec, as a result of the activities of the trading companies, depended on store food; with the collapse of fur prices, they were no longer able to earn the income necessary to pay for these needs. They were, as a result, depending on welfare.¹¹⁷ Trapping was the major source of earned income, and Cantley foresaw no change. The prospects for long-term instability in the fur trade meant that this would be a long-term problem in Quebec. In other areas, where there were stable sources of earned income, population was not a concern.

Cantley also discusses the impact of the fur trade on the Inuit, observing that in some areas of the Arctic, such as Baffin Island, the people retained their self-reliance, that is, their ability to live in the traditional way by hunting. In other areas, however, such as Quebec, the effect of contact with the trading companies was that the people became largely dependent on the proceeds from furs for their subsistence.¹¹⁸

Cantley's explanation of why the fur trade created greater dependency on trade stores in some parts of the Arctic than in others is that there was competition between trading companies in some parts of the Arctic but not in others. Where

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28.

¹¹⁶ Gunther, pp. 83, 84, 112.

¹¹⁷ Cantley estimated that in 1949-50, Inuit in Quebec, Baffin Island and the Keewatin area obtained only 40 per cent of their income from trapping, with the rest coming from family allowance, relief, and unpaid debts to the trading store (p. 39).

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

there was competition, such as along the east side of Hudson Bay, fur prices were too high, the price of goods was too low, and too much credit was extended. As a result, it became easier for the people to live on furs and credit than to hunt to the extent they had previously. This led to greater reliance on the store for food and clothes and a deterioration in self-reliance. Where the Hudson's Bay Company had a monopoly, however, the people were not spoiled and retained the ability to provide their own food from the natural resources of the country. While it was true, Cantley observes, that the Company paid less for furs and had higher profits, the Company's practices obliged people to continue hunting for a living. Cantley's conclusion is that the loss of self-reliance was not the result of less favourable hunting conditions in some parts of the Arctic but the result of excessive competition among trading companies.¹¹⁹

Cantley expresses concern that the use of imported foods was increasing steadily from year to year throughout the Arctic and that Inuit were coming to see such foods as necessities.¹²⁰ The report notes the importance that had been given to the nutritional value of foods issued as family allowance and relief and observes that "the effect of such issues must inevitably be to foster a taste for imported foods in the rising generation and the idea in later life that they are important."¹²¹ These expectations would lead to a need for stable and increasing incomes.

The report went on to express caution about the prospects for higher income and observes that the Inuit had survived for centuries before the arrival of non-Inuit by hunting and "that even today the most primitive communities, living largely on the resources within the country, are still the healthiest and most virile", which indicated to Cantley "that as long as they can obtain sufficient of their native food they are getting everything they need in the way of nourishment."¹²² It is in this context that Cantley goes on to observe that, if the Inuit were to live off the resources of the country as they had for centuries in the past, it would be necessary for them to be distributed in small communities over as wide an area as possible. Consistent with this theme, the report goes on to comment negatively about the trend in some places, such as Fort Chimo, for Inuit to use scrap materials to build houses.¹²³

Cantley's survey of economic conditions therefore situated the economic problem in terms of a large number of Inuit having been encouraged to become reliant on income from fur trading while the prospect of that economy being able to meet income expectations in the longer term was not good. Many Inuit did not have other alternatives for income. They depended on income from trapping

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 27-29.

and on the living that could be made from hunting. As a result, increased reliance on hunting was seen as the alternative.

Cantley draws no conclusions from his survey of population density. Rather, he explains his perception that the Inuit of northern Quebec had become too reliant on store food, with a corresponding loss of self-reliance, in terms of the people being spoiled by excessive competition among trading companies. As Cantley would observe in another report written in 1951, following a patrol of the southern Arctic, conditions in northern Quebec had not changed in 30 or 40 years, and there was no appreciable decline in game food resources.¹²⁴

Cantley did provide a recipe for action based on increasing Inuit reliance on hunting to substitute for the income that fur trading might not be able to provide in the long term. Cantley's recipe was based on the hard-nosed economics of an experienced trader; it was not based on any consideration of the wishes or desires of the Inuit. The alternative to Cantley's recipe was not seen to be famine and starvation but rather substantial continuing reliance on government income support in the form of family allowance, old age security and relief. Such reliance – even on programs universally available to Canadians regardless of need – was seen to be undesirable. For some Inuit who would be affected by adoption of this recipe, the effect could be characterized only as being sent "back to the land". There was nothing romantic about this. The beliefs and attitudes evident in the Cantley report are not substantially different from those that shaped government policy and action during the preceding half-century.¹²⁵

Cantley saw that assessing the adequacy of food game resources in any area of the Arctic in relation to its population would require more detailed area-by-area study. In the context of the economic problem as he saw it, however, whether game food resources were adequate in relation to population was not an issue. Rather the issue was the availability of income in the longer term. If income expectations could not be met from sources of earned income (as distinct from government income support), the question that then arose was whether game in the area would support increased reliance on hunting to substitute for income that could not be earned. The catch-phrase "over-population in relation to available resources" is too simple and inherently ambiguous. It can describe both a hunting population outstripping the available food game resources and the income problem discussed by Cantley. It is the latter use of the phrase that properly characterizes the problem described by Cantley. However, people

¹²⁴ Eastern Arctic Patrol, Southern Leg, 1951, referred to later in this report.

¹²⁵ The Gunther report states that "The main purpose of the projects was to deal with what was perceived to be a problem of over-population in relation to resources in northern Quebec – there is no evidence to indicate that this was a 'romantic' attempt to return the Inuit to a 'native way of life'." (p. 245) This was not a romantic scheme, but the underlying philosophy did, to borrow from Dr. Banting, involve "keeping the native, native".

could easily be – and apparently have been – led to believe that this referred to a problem of potential famine and starvation.

Cantley stated the basic policy questions facing the administration as follows:

The two main questions of policy facing the Administration today are (a) what use is to be made of these 1,100,000 square miles of Arctic territory, and (b) what provision is to be made for the future of the 8,550 Eskimo inhabitants.¹²⁶

He makes explicit reference to the unoccupied High Arctic islands, notes the long history of government inaction with respect to Inuit affairs, and goes on to make the following strategic observation:

World developments during and since World War II have focused attention on the strategic importance of Canada's Arctic territories...

It would seem that the age is past now when any country can continue to hold such a huge territory without occupying it or attempting to develop its resources, however sparse they may be. A territory that, fifteen or twenty years ago, may have been regarded as useless has now become, if not an asset, at least a liability of another kind. Instead of a hinterland it has become a potential frontier and as such it quite evidently interests countries other than our own. Whether we want to or not, it would appear that we shall have to revise our attitude towards the Arctic and take a much greater interest in its affairs than we have done in the past.

Strategic considerations are beyond the scope of this report except insofar as they may ultimately affect the native populations and the natural resources on which they depend.¹²⁷

Cantley thus situates the economic problem against the backdrop of strategic considerations involving the maintenance of Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic.

However, Cantley urged that “whatever strategic importance or romantic interest” the Arctic may have, the problem should be viewed objectively, and any exaggeration of the potential or requirements should be avoided. Otherwise he feared that the Inuit would “relinquish their former independent ways and become little more than wards living on Government charity.”¹²⁸ Cantley cautioned as follows:

While it is important that the natives should be protected as far as possible against privation and exploitation, it is more important that this protection should not be carried to a point where they will lose all initiative and become completely dependent. Yet this is the trend

¹²⁶ Cantley, p. 43.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

under our present administrative policy. The actual needs – as opposed to the desires – of the average Eskimo are small; generally, as long as he can obtain a minimum of food, clothing and shelter without exertion on his part, he will be satisfied. It is therefore very easy for him to adapt himself to a relief economy and to beg rather than work for a bare subsistence. Unless this trait of the Eskimo character is fully understood by all concerned, grave mistakes can easily be made.¹²⁹

The Inuit were thus seen, on one hand, as possessing ideal characteristics when leading a traditional life but, on the other hand, as needing to have objective decisions made for them without regard to their own desires because they lacked the ability to resist the “temptation”¹³⁰ of welfare. Transferring responsibility for administering social welfare programs to the trading company from the RCMP was seen as part of the solution, because “the average trader was not prone to giving much for nothing [and the Inuit] had to get out and earn their living either by hunting or trapping.”¹³¹

A return to increased reliance on hunting did not mean the end of famine and starvation. Much of the game in the Arctic is migratory, so their availability is seasonal and cyclical. Even where game is relatively abundant, the ability to hunt depends on weather and ice conditions; adverse conditions can make hunting impossible, at times for long periods. Inuit could and did suffer famine or starvation when game failed to materialize or when weather and ice conditions were adverse. Cantley understood this. He recognized that a policy of requiring the Inuit to live off the resources of the country would mean that “They will have seasons of moderate abundance and extreme scarcity, just as their forefathers had, but overall they will obtain, not luxury, but at least a higher standard of living than could ever be provided for permanently in larger communities.”¹³² It was the standard of living over the long term, Cantley believed, that would justify returning Inuit to conditions where they might face famine or starvation from time to time.

The Cantley report does not support the suggestion by Gunther that the relocation was set against the background of starvation and other circumstances that made it essential for the Department to do something.¹³³ Cantley was weighing the long-term benefits of promoting greater reliance on hunting, with its inevitable periods of scarcity, against the long-term instability of the fur trade as a source of income and the prospect of reliance on income support programs and decline in Inuit society. The approach to relocations reflected in Cantley’s

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 45-46.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

¹³² *Ibid.*, p. 27.

¹³³ Gunther, pp. 111-113, 245-247.

report contemplated that a successful relocation, on these terms, could involve periods of extreme hardship for the relocatees.

Government correspondence of the early 1950s reflects all the issues discussed in the Cantley report: the prospects for Inuit obtaining income from activities other than fur trading; the level of relief payments; the concern that country food resources were inadequate in relation to the population in some areas; and the consequences of the impact of non-Inuit activity in the North, including the availability of 'handouts' on the morale of the Inuit. There is also some mention of the concern about sovereignty that Cantley saw as forming the background to his report and of changing attitudes to the North in government.

Relocations as a Solution

Government Reports of the Early 1950s

Relocations were not a new development. The Northwest Territories Council, in proposing Cantley's study, suggested that Inuit might be moved to areas believed to have abundant food game resources. Action on relocating Inuit would not await Cantley's 1951 report. The Cantley report merely provides an insight into the concerns and attitudes of the time. Parallel to Cantley's work, various reports in the years leading up to the relocation would identify places considered suitable for new communities and places from which relocatees might come, particularly northern Quebec.

The Eastern Arctic Patrol was authorized by the Department to carry out relocations in the following terms:

When deemed advisable, Eskimo families may, with their consent, be moved from over-hunted and unproductive areas to areas where native food resources are more plentiful.¹³⁴

One of the principal purposes of the Patrol was the maintenance of Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic. Alex Stevenson, the officer in charge of the 1950 Eastern Arctic Patrol, recommended that Inuit be moved from north Baffin Island to Devon Island and that, in addition to reopening the Craig Harbour RCMP detachment, Inuit settlements be established on Ellesmere Island, extending north along the coast from Craig Harbour as far as the Bache Peninsula. Sovereignty was identified as a consideration in such a move.¹³⁵

Temporary relocation emerged in concern expressed, in the April 24, 1950 RCMP report from Inukjuak, about the hardships suffered by the Inuit during 1949-50,

¹³⁴ N.W.T. Archives, Stevenson Papers, as quoted in Grant, vol. 1 of supplementary materials provided to Commission.

¹³⁵ RG85, vol. 1127, file 201-1-8 [2A], as quoted by Grant, vol. 1; also referred to by Gunther, pp. 22-23.

when fur prices collapsed. It was reported that there had been a great lack of seals during January and February and that it was not uncommon for a camp to hunt for two or three days after their last food was gone before coming to the post for assistance. The police and the Hudson's Bay Company post manager kept a close check on conditions at the various camps out of fear that, if the Inuit came to the end of their food and then were confined by bad weather, starvation could result. The Inuit were reported as living very close to the post and not having been able to earn enough to feed or clothe themselves, despite much hard work. Relief issues were needed when the people did not have enough to eat and to provide necessary ammunition, nets and walrus hunting outfits so the Inuit could obtain game food. The economic situation was described in terms of considerable uncertainty. It is suggested that the Inuit could be sent to the islands in Hudson Bay during the summer to take advantage of better game resources and that the Inuit economy could be stabilized by providing all Inuit with a basic minimum income.¹³⁶

The Department of Resources and Development did not wait for Cantley's report to acknowledge relocations as a solution to the economic problem. The Department's annual report for the year ending March 31, 1951 indicates that the improvement in fox prices over those in 1949-50 had relieved the immediate economic problems to some extent, but that the recent experiences had emphasized longer-term issues requiring a long-term policy. In this regard, the Department stated that

Continued consideration is being given to the possibility of opening up new areas for Eskimo habitation and providing for a greater utilization of known resources in other areas.¹³⁷

In Search of a Long-Term Policy

What was missing was a long-term policy. Receipt of the second half of the Cantley report in November 1951 set the stage for its development. Cantley's recommendations were at odds with those made by Henry Larsen of the RCMP. Cantley opposed Larsen's recommendation to establish a Crown trading company and recommended reduced responsibility for the RCMP in providing for Inuit welfare.¹³⁸ A November 22, 1951 memorandum from G. Sinclair, Director of Arctic Services, to the Deputy Minister of Resources and Development (in the

¹³⁶ RG18, acc. 85-86/048, vol. 55, file TA500-8-1-13; referred to in the written material submitted to the Commission by Grant and quoted extensively by Gunther, pp. 116-117.

¹³⁷ Report of the Department of Resources and Development for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1951, p. 80, as quoted in Grant, vol. 1.

¹³⁸ Unpublished manuscript material provided to the Commission by the Larsen family shows that Larsen, as the officer in charge of "G" Division, responsible for policing the Northwest Territories and Arctic Quebec, was concerned about the deterioration that idleness and

latter's capacity as Commissioner of the Northwest Territories) discusses these differences of view and expresses concern about the ability of the Inuit to sustain themselves. Sinclair was concerned that the Inuit were staying at trading centres for extended periods instead of continuing their "former mode of life and gaining of a livelihood from the sea and land" and depending instead, with very limited opportunities for earning income, on family allowance, old age security, and relief. Apart from the cost to the government, this was seen as involving serious consequences for the Inuit. Sinclair proposed that the situation warranted a round table discussion by as many as possible of those with an intimate knowledge of the problem and the establishment of a committee to assist in determining policy.¹³⁹ This recommendation gave birth to the 1952 Conference on Eskimo Affairs and, later, the Eskimo Affairs Committee.

The Idea of Relocations Gains Support

The relocation would not, however, await the development, with the assistance of the Eskimo Affairs Committee, of a long-term policy. The problem identified by the Northwest Territories Council in 1949, and the possible solution of opening up new areas, were confirmed in substance by Cantley in his 1951 report. In the meantime, the Department had been comfortable enough with the idea of relocation to refer to it in its 1950-51 annual report. The 1951 Eastern Arctic Patrol had also been directed to make inquiries about whether any Inuit families in northern Quebec "would be prepared to be transferred to eastern Baffinland or other suitable places where they would have a better chance of making a living".¹⁴⁰ The 1952 Conference on Eskimo Affairs would, however, provide a sounding board for the Department's concerns and possible solutions.

The instructions to the 1951 Eastern Arctic Patrol identified northern Quebec as an area where problems were most acute and suggested breaking up population concentrations around the various centres, including Inukjuak. The concern was to identify other areas, possibly along the Hudson Bay coast, where game food would be available and the Inuit could "gradually be made self-supporting

dependence on relief would cause. Larsen was in favour of the education and employment of Inuit but believed that allowing the Inuit to stay idle in communities could be harmful. If gainful work was not available in a community, Larsen proposed establishing new Inuit communities where the natural resources would support hunting, fishing and trapping. However, unlike Cantley's recommendations, he saw Inuit families being provided with small, comfortable frame houses in which the families could live in comfort and security when the men were out hunting and trapping. This would permit the children to attend the school that would be established in the community. The trading post would be operated as an Inuit-run co-operative so that the Inuit could secure the profit of trading and understand the benefits of commerce.

¹³⁹ RG22, vol. 254, file 40-8-1/2; document provided by Grant; also referred to by Gunther, p. 89.

¹⁴⁰ Gunther, p. 118, citing RG85, vol. 80, file 201-1(26).

again".¹⁴¹ Cantley was the officer in charge of the southern leg of the Patrol. His report notes that conditions all along the Quebec coast had not been good since the decline in white fox prices two years previously but that people seemed to be trying to adjust to the new conditions. Cantley wrote as follows:

I do not think there has been any appreciable decline in the food resources of this area. Conditions do not appear to be any worse than they were thirty or forty years ago; the only difference is that the people themselves are less spread out and have reached a stage where they are inclined to rely less on their own efforts and more on the Government for the fulfilment of their wants.¹⁴²

It is significant that this report indicates that game food resources were not perceived to be in decline and that conditions in the area were no different than they had been for 30 or 40 years. In that regard, the relocatees have said they did not experience any general decline in game in the Inukjuak area. Cantley expresses no concern about population growth or any potential for a growing population to outstrip the food game resources. The Patrol report is consistent with Cantley's economic survey report in identifying increased reliance on income as the problem, with too much of that income coming from programs such as family allowance and from relief. Reducing the population density near trading posts would require people to hunt more for their food needs.

Alex Stevenson, officer in charge of the northern leg of the 1951 Eastern Arctic Patrol, repeated the suggestion he had made the previous year about relocating Inuit from northern Baffin Island. He reported that "There are points on Baffin Island, Devon Island, Ellesmere Island and other islands of the Canadian Arctic Archipelago where a good number of natives could be re-established. There is no doubt the country produce are plentiful in the fore-mentioned regions and providing the natives are willing to move, I can see no reason why it should not be a success. Incidentally when I was in Pond Inlet, Eskimo Idlout who is one of the top natives in that district, approached me on this very subject. He said that his camp which comprised about four families would be extremely interested in moving north to Ellesmere Island".¹⁴³ The report goes on to ask a critical question: Is the goal to be the pursuit of employment opportunities, or are people to remain hunters and trappers? This question would continue to be raised and discussed in the years following the relocation.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, referring to RG85, vol. 1127, file 201-1-8, Part 2A.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 95, quoting without the reference to Idlout from report dated 24.1.52, RG85, vol. 1207, file 201-1-8, Part 3.

The Role of the RCMP in Relocations

The RCMP did not play a completely passive role in decision making concerning the Inuit, although the Department did have the primary responsibility. In August 1951, the RCMP detachment at Craig Harbour on Ellesmere Island was re-opened to assert Canadian sovereignty in the High Arctic. Two regular RCMP members were assigned to the detachment, together with two Inuit special constables and their families from the Pond Inlet area.¹⁴⁴ In February 1952, Larsen, the officer in charge of "G" Division, recommended to the Commissioner of the RCMP that an RCMP detachment further north on Ellesmere Island in the vicinity of Cape Sabine be re-opened by moving the Craig Harbour detachment to the Bache Peninsula. It was recommended that, in addition to the two Inuit families employed by the RCMP, the RCMP should "endeavour to recruit three or four good Eskimo families from the Pond Inlet area to be transported up there for the purpose of trapping, hunting, etc., and thereby in a general way improve their economic circumstances."¹⁴⁵ The proposal for a new Inuit community set out in this memorandum contains elements of the 1953 relocation except that Larsen's proposal would have permitted individual hunters to be credited with the proceeds from the sale of furs. He also contemplated that there would be no mark-up on goods. Furthermore, the people were to come from the High Arctic community of Pond Inlet where, in 1951, Idlout had indicated a willingness to go north. Idlout did, in fact, go to Resolute Bay in 1955 where he communicated a general sense of satisfaction with his new surroundings.¹⁴⁶

The Deputy Minister of the Department of Resources and Development was advised of the possibility of opening an RCMP detachment in the vicinity of Cape Sabine, in the area of the Bache Peninsula on the east coast of Ellesmere Island, in a February 11, 1952 letter from the Commissioner of the RCMP. The letter also referred to Larsen's recommendations respecting the relocation of Inuit to that area.¹⁴⁷ The Deputy Minister's reply of February 22, 1952 advised

¹⁴⁴ Wilfred Doucette was present when the Craig Harbour detachment was reopened. He observed many walrus and seals and also saw caribou and foxes. He saw the remains of the Inuit settlement from earlier times. The ship had stopped at Inukjuak on the way north, and he had been told that, when the ship came in, the Inuit got dressed up in their best clothes. He did not think that the Inukjuak Inuit looked very good compared with other Inuit he saw elsewhere. Mr. Doucette's presentation was recorded during a special consultation involving Commission counsel on June 25, 1993, as a result of Mr. Doucette's inability to attend the hearings. See pp. 73-74 and 90-91 of the transcript of that consultation.

¹⁴⁵ February 8, 1952, RG18, acc. 85-86/048, vol. 42, file B1512-2-4-Q-27; document provided by Grant.

¹⁴⁶ Information about Idlout's satisfaction with his new surroundings was provided to the Commission by Doug Wilkinson, June 28, 1993, Tr., vol. 1, and Gerard Kenney, June 29, 1993, Tr., vol. 2, and the letters referred to in Mr. Kenney's presentation, as well as the transcript of an interview with Idlout supplied by Mr. Wilkinson.

¹⁴⁷ RG85, vol. 1070, file 251-4-2; document provided by Grant; also cited by Gunther, p. 24.

that the Department had already been considering the feasibility of transferring Inuit to the Arctic Islands from other “over-populated areas”, which were not identified by name. However, northern Quebec had been identified in earlier departmental correspondence as such an area. The Deputy Minister’s letter conveys a clear conviction that relocated Inuit could adapt themselves quickly to life on Ellesmere Island and would be able to make a “better living”.¹⁴⁸ The reference to making a “better living” is broad enough to capture any objective although, given the absence of opportunities for employment, the reference could only be to a better living hunting and trapping, with the emphasis on hunting since the instability of the fur trading economy affected the entire Arctic. The letter did not make any commitment but indicated instead a preference to wait to see what came out of the conference on Eskimo affairs that was to be held in May.

The 1952 Eskimo Affairs Conference

The issue of transferring groups of Inuit to under-populated areas was on the agenda of the May 1952 Eskimo Affairs Conference.¹⁴⁹ It appeared under the heading of “Policy on Employment of Eskimos”.

Population growth was not seen to be a matter of immediate concern. Mortality rates had kept the Inuit population from growing. However, the summary of the proceedings indicates that population growth *could* become a problem with improvements in health. The summary of proceedings emphasizes that “the immediate need was to assist the natives to continue to follow their traditional way of life as hunters.” Starvation was not mentioned. The major economic problem that emerges from the Conference summary is not a decline in game food resources, but is identified clearly as the instability of the income economy, primarily trapping. Hunting is referred to frequently in a context that points to it as the general way to economic self-sufficiency.¹⁵⁰

The summary on one hand characterizes the Inuit as essentially hunters who have suffered because of forsaking their traditions and, on the other, suggests

¹⁴⁸ RG22, vol. 254, file 40-8-1/2; document provided by Grant; also cited by Gunther, p. 96.

¹⁴⁹ The Conference was chaired by the Deputy Minister of Resources and Development and attended by representatives of that Department, the Northwest Territories Council, the RCMP led by the Commissioner, the Department of National Health and Welfare led by the Deputy Minister, the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, the Defence Research Board, the Department of National Defence, the Department of Transport, the Department of Fisheries, the Hudson’s Bay Company, the Roman Catholic Mission, the Anglican Mission, the United States Embassy, and the National Film Board in the person of Mr. D. Wilkinson.

¹⁵⁰ “The summary of the proceedings of a meeting on Eskimo affairs held May 19 and 20, 1952 in the Boardroom of the Confederation Building, Ottawa”, RG85, vol. 294, file 1005-7[5]; document provided by Grant. Although the Conference is referred to in the Gunther report, the details of what was discussed as they appear in the Conference summary are not set out in that report.

that many Inuit had become increasingly reliant on an income economy and the store supplies that could be obtained with income. Plainly, some Inuit were more like, and others less like, their hunting ancestors. Whether any particular group of Inuit lived more or less like their hunting ancestors could be very important in any scheme to "assist the natives to continue to follow their traditional way of life as hunters". Those who lived more like their hunting ancestors might find such a scheme acceptable. Others might find such a scheme difficult. The High Arctic relocation was aimed at those who were perceived to be too dependent on income. The potential for hardship was thus inherent in the scheme.

The Conference summary does not articulate an awareness that the clear implication of pursuing a policy of self-reliance through greater reliance on hunting was a significant change for Inuit who had become dependent on an income economy and hence on the trading post and store-bought supplies. An economic program that emphasized increased reliance on hunting would involve a return to more traditional ways of living, with a perceived improvement in morale and personal dignity. In short, it would involve a restoration of what was perceived to be the proper state of the people. Another word for such a program is 'rehabilitation', and the 1953 relocation to the High Arctic was referred to by some of those involved as a rehabilitation project. Although the Conference summary does not use the term, the essence of the consensus that emerged from the Conference, as reflected in the Conference summary, was a rehabilitation policy with the immediate objective of returning Inuit to earlier ways of living.

The consensus, as reflected in the Conference summary, was that the "assistance" given to the Inuit "to continue to follow their traditional way of life as hunters" could take the form of "seeing that they were properly equipped and placed in the most suitable areas for hunting. Movements could be initiated from over-populated or depleted districts to areas not presently occupied or where the natural resources could support a greater number of people. Steps should be taken to assist the Eskimos in improving their hunting techniques and in interesting them in making fuller use of all the resources available." Employment would not be discouraged but employment should either be reasonably permanent or on a basis "that by following it they would not become wholly incapable of returning to their native way of life if it should fail". The Conference consensus – involving all the institutions active in the Arctic – thus supported in broad terms the Department's approach to relocations.

The Conference summary observation that "Canadian Eskimos were not legally wards of the government" constituted an effective rebuff to the proposal by Larsen of the RCMP that the legal authority of the Department with respect to Inuit affairs should be clarified and that it was desirable that legislation be passed in this regard. Larsen had suggested that legislation be passed to deal with Inuit affairs or, alternatively, that the *Indian Act* be amended to provide for

the administration of Inuit affairs, having regard to the 1939 judgement of the Supreme Court of Canada. The comment that Inuit “were not legally wards of the government” also demonstrates the confusion about legal responsibility that persisted in departmental thinking at that time. The Department apparently failed to appreciate the federal government’s special constitutional responsibility to the Inuit. Later in the year, Larsen would repeat his concern that the legal responsibility of the government to the Inuit be clarified through legislation. Superintendent Peacock of the RCMP, commenting on Larsen’s views, observed that he thought the view generally held by the Department was that “Eskimos are not wards of the Government but have complete citizenship rights. There was a Supreme Court decision holding that Eskimos and Indians were in the same category but I do not think that is the opinion held by Northern Administration officials.”¹⁵¹ This suggests that the Supreme Court might make declarations as to the law, but it was up to the government to accept the declaration and act on it. The government’s legal responsibilities are discussed later in the report (see Chapter 10).

Economic Conditions Improve but the Relocation Idea Persists

Economic conditions continued to improve in 1951-52. A June 1952 report from the RCMP detachment at Inukjuak reported that things had been good during the past winter. “Inefficient” trappers had been provided with equipment and told by the police that if they did not use it to procure a sufficient amount of country food and fur, the equipment would be taken away and given to someone who was “willing to work for a living”.¹⁵² The RCMP report referred to the population density around Inukjuak – not to the scarcity of food as such – as a problem and suggested that it would be desirable if some of the Inuit “could be made interested to move to the outlying islands or to another district entirely.”¹⁵³

The report of the southern leg of the 1952 Eastern Arctic Patrol, with R.G. Johnston in charge, also describes the situation at Inukjuak. The various movements of Inuit, by the Hudson’s Bay Company and the police, to offshore islands and other parts of the coast are described. Relief is said to remain quite high, although the RCMP detachment had reduced relief considerably through “efficient handling of the recipients and placing them in better hunting grounds”.¹⁵⁴ The Patrol reported that “The country produce around Port Harrison [Inukjuak] is fairly plentiful particularly seal and fish.” It was the long-term outlook that was the cause for greatest concern. The Patrol reported that the Inuit of the

¹⁵¹ RG18, acc. 85-86/048, vol. 42, file D-1412-2-4-Q-27; document provided by Grant.

¹⁵² Gunther, p. 120, quoting from “General Conditions-Eskimo”, 29.6.52, RG18, acc. 85-86/048, vol. 42, file D-1512-2-4-Q-27.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ RG85, vol. 1207, file 201-1-8/3, Eastern Arctic Patrol report, 1952.

area were able to get by, but if fox prices continued at a low level, the earnings of many people would be greatly reduced in poor fur years.

The report also stated that ten Inukjuak families had indicated their willingness to move to Baffin Island, and it was suggested that the move should take place the next summer. The report does not state what was said to the people who indicated their willingness to go to Baffin Island. As was seen earlier, beginning in 1951, the Patrol was instructed to identify people who would be prepared to be relocated. In other words, the issue of relocation would be raised by the government officials. Government officials cannot be taken as reporting on a spontaneous expression of desire by the Inuit. The Inuit relocatees have said that the relocation was a government-initiated project. They themselves had no thought of moving.

The report of the northern leg of the 1952 Eastern Arctic Patrol, with Cantley in charge, reported that walrus, seal and other game food were plentiful in the area of the Craig Harbour RCMP detachment. Cantley had discussed this with Larsen, and Larsen had indicated his willingness to have the RCMP detachment co-operate with the Department. The Patrol report suggested that a similar arrangement could be made if the RCMP established a detachment in the Cape Sabine area the following year and that families from one or other of the "over-populated northern Quebec areas" could be relocated to Ellesmere Island. Musk-ox and caribou were reported to be fairly numerous on Ellesmere Island although, apart from a few caribou shot by the Craig Harbour detachment, the land animals had not been hunted. It was reported that Greenlanders had been hunting on Ellesmere Island and that the only way to exercise any control over this would be to establish a detachment in the Cape Sabine area. It was also observed that "The occupation of the island by Canadian Eskimos will remove any excuse Greenlanders may presently have for crossing over and hunting there." This comment appears to recognize that the presence of Canadian Inuit hunting in a game preserve created for their benefit would contribute to enforcing the exclusion of foreign hunters from the preserve.

The Patrol report goes on to observe that it would be desirable for the RCMP to re-open a detachment at Resolute Bay to ensure that regulations were enforced. No recommendation was made with respect to relocating Inuit to Resolute Bay, and no observations were made concerning the presence of game in the area. The Patrol suggested that Arctic Bay would afford a suitable location for more Inuit in light of the plentiful game in the area. A similar observation is made with respect to Clyde River. The availability of country food is emphasized in the Patrol report as important in making sites attractive for receiving relocatees. The possibilities for seasonal employment at some of the locations mentioned, such as Clyde River, were seen as an additional factor.

The 1952 Meeting of the Committee on Eskimo Affairs

The Conference on Eskimo Affairs had agreed that a committee should be established to initiate future policy. The first meeting of the Committee on Eskimo Affairs was held on October 16, 1952 in Ottawa.¹⁵⁵ The Committee identified the priority to be the development of an overall educational program for Inuit. Much of the Committee minutes are devoted to discussion on health issues. There was some discussion of relocating Inuit in the following terms:

Consideration was given to the possibility of assisting natives to move from over-populated areas to places where they could more readily obtain a living. It was agreed that Craig Harbour and Cape Sabine on Ellesmere Island should be investigated as possible localities where Eskimos could be placed under the care of the RCM Police detachments and arrangements made to enable them to obtain necessary supplies through the Loan Fund.¹⁵⁶

The Loan Fund was not yet in existence. The Committee had approved the establishment of a Loan Fund totalling \$50,000 to provide loans to Inuit groups or individuals. The Committee agreed that Inuit should be encouraged to take employment, but only if they could retain "their ability to return to the native way of life if employment should cease". No mention is made of starvation. The "transfer of Eskimos" is only one of many items and is not described in terms that suggest any extreme urgency. In that regard, the minutes conclude with observations about the substantial progress that had been made in providing care for the Inuit. The relocation of Inuit was given "consideration", as distinct from other items, which resulted in agreement or decisions. It would seem, however, that, given the consensus favouring relocations among those involved in Inuit administration at the time, the Committee accepted relocation in principle, and it was only the specific locations that were under consideration. The decision by the Deputy Minister to relocate northern Quebec Inuit to the High Arctic, would, however, be made before the Committee would meet again.

The \$50,000 Loan Fund approved by the Committee would be included in appropriations for the Department for the 1953-54 fiscal year under the line item Eskimo Loan Fund. Its purpose, as approved by Parliament, was to "promote commercial activities" of Inuit through "loans or investments...made to or

¹⁵⁵ It was chaired by the Deputy Minister of Resources and Development, and representation included the Commissioner of the RCMP, representatives of both the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches, the General Manager of the Hudson's Bay Company, the Director of Indian Health Services, Department of National Health and Welfare, and the Chief of the Department's Northern Administration Division.

¹⁵⁶ Minutes of the First Meeting of Special Committee on Eskimo Affairs, Thursday, October 16, 1952, RG22, vol. 254, file 40-8-1/3; document provided by Grant; also cited briefly by Gunther, p. 105.

in respect of individual Eskimos or groups of Eskimos".¹⁵⁷ The Loan Fund would operate as a revolving fund. Repayments on loans would be returned to the Fund so that further loans could be made within the total Fund limit of \$50,000.00. A description of the operation of the Loan Fund is provided in Appendix 6.

As of October 1952, however, it cannot be said that there was a plan to relocate northern Quebec Inuit to the High Arctic. There was at most an idea, a concept, of relocating Northern Quebec Inuit possibly to the High Arctic.

The Idea That Had Emerged

What was the idea that had formed? To begin with, starvation did not emerge as a significant consideration. There is no sense of extreme urgency such as might be apparent if the threat of starvation were imminent. Instead the prevailing concern was for long-term economic well-being. "Over-population" in Quebec became a cause of concern as a result of the decline in the fur economy. Many people in northern Quebec had become reliant on an income economy based on the fur trade. It was believed that the fur trade would not be able to provide adequate income on a consistent basis in the long term, with the result that declines in earned income would be made up through government income support programs. In areas where the population around the trading post had access to sufficient game, the decline in income was seen to be offset by greater reliance on game food. However, reliance on government support, including relief, was seen to be heavier when greater reliance on game food was not feasible because of the population density around the post. The idea was to move people away from these "over-populated" posts to areas where they could rely on game food. It was recognized that the inclination of the people was to stay where they were. There appears to have been little recognition that the consequences for the Inuit – who had become, like most Canadians, dependent on an income economy – could only be significant change and potential hardship.

The idea of moving people away from "over-populated" posts was reinforced by the perception of moral decline in people who had become reliant on unearned income in the form of relief, family allowance and old age security. Inuit who relied more heavily on game food for their diet were also believed to be healthier. A push toward greater reliance on hunting was thus seen to achieve economic, moral and health objectives.

The discussions leading up to the relocation decision reflect little consideration of the desires of the people themselves or of social and cultural issues. The Inuit were not represented in the decision making and it appears, given the recognition that the inclination of the people was to stay where they were, that the wishes of the Inuit were to be disregarded. Various steps were being taken

¹⁵⁷ *Appropriation Act, No. 3, 1953*, S.C. 1953, c. 54, Schedule A, Vote No. 546.

around Inukjuak, for example, to push people to become self-reliant. The push did not take the form of overt force. Rather it appeared in the guise of leadership, guidance and encouragement to people who were seen to be unable to make the right choices for themselves. It appears clear that, in the locally-initiated relocations of Quebec Inuit to other parts of the Quebec coast or to offshore islands, people were told where to go, and they went where they were told.¹⁵⁸

Administrators believed that there were abundant wildlife resources in various parts of the High Arctic, although no comprehensive study of the wildlife resources of the area had been undertaken. Administrators appear to have been relying upon the experience and observations of various people posted or travelling to the North. It was also assumed that the relocated Inuit could adapt very quickly to the new conditions in the High Arctic.

The life of the hunter was inherently precarious. This was recognized by Cantley, who acknowledged that a relocation could involve periods of extreme hardship but saw this as justifiable in light of the long-term desirability of increased reliance on hunting. This hard-nosed economic view was an aspect of a broader view that involved making what were considered to be the objectively right decisions for a people who could not make the right decision for themselves. It is implicit in this view that the consent of those involved counted for very little.

The Plan Takes Shape

The idea began to take the form of a plan in December 1952 when Cantley sent a memorandum to his superior, Mr. Meikle, outlining programs that might be undertaken over the next year or two to improve conditions among the Inuit.¹⁵⁹ Cantley observed that if anything was to be done in the coming year it would be necessary to start making preliminary arrangements immediately. An early decision was requested. A decision would not be taken until early April 1953. Mr. Meikle referred the memorandum to his superior, the Director, Northern Administration and Lands Branch, who then consulted with his superior, the Chief of the Northern Administration Division. It would appear that there was then some discussion within the Department, leading to a decision by the Deputy Minister, although documents in that regard do not appear to be in existence. The development of the plan is, however, discernible in the available documents.

¹⁵⁸ Professor Gunther acknowledged in his June 30, 1993 presentation to the Commission that local moves could involve pressure, but he argued that the Inuit were not pressured in the 1953 relocation to the High Arctic (Tr., vol. 3, p. 971).

¹⁵⁹ Cantley to Meikle, 18.12.52, RG85/1234/251-1, Part 2; document provided by Grant; also cited by Gunther, pp. 106-107.

Cantley's December 1952 memorandum on improving conditions among the Inuit contained, among other things, four proposals for the transfer of Inuit from over-populated areas to places where it was considered they could more readily make a living and be self-supporting. The entire memorandum is three and a half pages long, and the discussion of the four proposed transfer projects occupies one and a quarter pages.

Under the heading "Transfers of Natives from Over-populated Areas to Places Where They Can More Readily Make a Living and be Made Self-supporting", it was proposed that ten families be transferred from the Inukjuak area to Ellesmere Island. A second proposed transfer involved ten families from northern Quebec and/or Cape Dorset to Resolute Bay on Cornwallis Island if arrangements could be made with the RCMP to station a member there. It was suggested that arrangements could "probably" be made for employment at the base for some of the Inuit on a year-round basis as maintenance crew. The third proposal involved the transfer of ten families from northern Quebec and/or Cape Dorset to Clyde River on Baffin Island, where it was suggested that most of the Inuit men in the area could "probably" find employment on summer construction projects. The fourth proposal involved using the Loan Fund to assist Inuit who were already living and hunting on the islands in Hudson Bay off the Quebec coast and to encourage others to go there.

Cantley's memorandum does not refer to the transfer of Pond Inlet Inuit. Nor does it speak of the relocation as an experiment. Stevenson had suggested to Cantley that the transfer of Inukjuak Inuit to Ellesmere Island would require the assistance of Pond Inlet Inuit to help them "contend with the dark period which they are not familiar with and...although the terrain is similar to the Quebec coast, I know that from past experience with the Dorset natives that the dark period causes some discontentment".¹⁶⁰ It was not long, however, before the project was described as an experiment and Stevenson's suggestion became an accepted part of the decision-making process.

This is reflected in the January 12, 1953 letter from Cunningham, the Director, Northern Administration and Land Branch, to Cheshire, the General Manager of the Hudson's Bay Company, Fur Trade Department. That letter states that "since there is a big difference between living conditions in the High Arctic and those in Quebec, we think it would be advisable to make a limited experiment only until we can be sure that the people taken from the Quebec area can accustom themselves to living in the High Arctic. It may be necessary to send one or two families from North Baffin Island with these people in getting them used to hunting conditions particularly during the long winter."¹⁶¹

¹⁶⁰ Gunther, p. 106, quoting from Stevenson to Cantley, 8.12.52, RG85, vol. 1234, file 251-1, Part 2.

¹⁶¹ Gunther, pp. 107-108, quoting from Cunningham to Cheshire, 12.01.53, RG85, vol. 1513, file 1012, Part 1.

The letter also indicates that a smaller number of families would be involved than suggested in Cantley's December memorandum. The letter speaks of the possibility of transferring five families each to Craig Harbour and Cape Herschel on Ellesmere Island and "possibly" to Resolute Bay. It was suggested that "if the experiment proves successful", more Inuit could be transferred to these communities, particularly to Resolute Bay where it was expected that the base would be permanent and would offer employment in addition to hunting and trapping for a large number of men. Northern Quebec is referred to as the area that is causing the Department the most concern with respect to over-population, causing the Inuit to have difficulty in making a living by hunting and trapping.

In December 1952, an RCMP staff sergeant went to Resolute Bay. His report of January 22, 1953 stated that "quarters would have to be built for any Eskimo families who might be sent to Resolute Bay air base, or that possibly a Quonset hut now at the RCAF detachment at Resolute Bay could be converted into four suites."¹⁶²

Like the re-opening of the police posts on Ellesmere Island, the police post at Resolute Bay was seen to contribute to the maintenance of Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic. A December 29, 1952 memorandum to J.W. Pickersgill, Clerk of the Privy Council and Secretary to the Cabinet, situates the opening of RCMP posts in the Arctic in the context of a discussion about the importance of maintaining Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic. The memorandum states that "About a year ago Mr. Pearson [Secretary of State for External Affairs] remarked in private that he wondered how good our claim was to some areas of the Arctic. ...probably of much greater concern is the sort of *de facto* U.S. sovereignty which has caused so much trouble in the last war and which might be exercised again." It was recommended that the RCMP open new posts in the Arctic and that the Privy Council Office support the proposal to open a post at Resolute Bay.¹⁶³

An exchange of correspondence in February 1953 between the Deputy Minister and the Commissioner of the RCMP confirmed the willingness of the RCMP to re-open the Resolute Bay detachment. The Deputy Minister asked whether the RCMP proposed to re-open the detachment in 1953 because the Department was giving consideration to the possibility of transferring Inuit from "over-populated areas" to various places in the High Arctic, including Resolute Bay and would not consider doing so without the co-operation of the RCMP, "as there is no one else at these places who could assist these people in adjusting themselves to new

¹⁶² Commissioner of RCMP to Deputy Minister, 6.5.53, RG22, vol. 254, file 40-8-1, Part 3; document provided by Grant. The document refers to the January 22, 1953 report of the RCMP staff sergeant, which had been provided by the Commissioner to the Deputy Minister in February 1953 and is referred to in February 1953 correspondence between the Deputy Minister and the Commissioner.

¹⁶³ Phillips to Pickersgill, 29.12.52, DCER vol. 1952, pp. 1996-1200; referred to in Grant, vol. 1.

conditions...". The Commissioner replied that the Force would be willing to station a member at Resolute Bay "with the specific job of taking care of the natives. He might even be able to encourage some hunting and trapping on their part and handle their furs for them."¹⁶⁴

The Department of Transport had been advised in December 1952 by the Director of Northern Administration that the Department was giving consideration to transferring Inuit to Ellesmere Island. The Department acknowledged the inquiry about the requirements involved in the transfer by letter dated December 30, 1952.¹⁶⁵

It is clear, therefore, that the relocation plan was being discussed at senior levels of the Department, including the Deputy Minister, and that preliminary inquiries were being made with a view to obtaining the support and co-operation of other departments concerned, namely, the Department of Transport, which operated the annual ship supply, and the RCMP, whose members would be required to supervise the Inuit, as well as the Hudson's Bay Company. What was intended had taken shape since Cantley's December 1952 memorandum, and what was intended is discernible from the correspondence of late 1952 and early 1953. Although approval of the plan would not be given until early April, the basic shape of the plan had emerged by mid-January 1953, as evidenced by the January 12, 1953 letter to the Hudson's Bay Company. This was before Cabinet reactivated the Advisory Committee on Northern Development.

It was on January 22, 1953 that Cabinet discussed the concerns of the Secretary of State for External Affairs about the increasing level of U.S. activity in the Arctic and the potential for the *de facto* exercise of American sovereignty. Cabinet directed that the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Northern Development be requested to have the Committee "consider and report periodically on all phases of development in the Canadian Arctic and on the means which might be employed to preserve or develop the political, administrative, scientific and defence interests of Canada in that area."¹⁶⁶ The Advisory Committee had been established in early 1948 and held five meetings between February 1948 and December 1949 in connection with a program intended to re-Canadianize the Arctic following the influx of U.S. personnel into the Arctic during the war. The Committee was chaired by the Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Development and was reconvened on February 16, 1953 pursuant to an urgent request from the Clerk of the Privy Council, J.W. Pickersgill.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁴ Gunther, pp. 162 and 163, referring to February 20, 1953 correspondence from Young to Nicholson and February 24, 1953 correspondence from Nicholson to Young.

¹⁶⁵ RG22, Box 176, file 40-2-20; referred to in Grant, vol. 1.

¹⁶⁶ RG2, series a5, vol. 2652, file January 1953-April 1953; document provided by Grant; also referred to by Gunther, pp. 52-53.

¹⁶⁷ Pickersgill to Young, 26.1.53; referred to in Soberman, p. 41, fn. 10.

The Clerk reviewed the background of concerns about the Canadian North and the apprehension of seeming encroachment on Canadian sovereignty and “emphasized the need to ensure that the civilian activities in the north were predominantly Canadian.”¹⁶⁸

The Advisory Committee had before it draft reports from all the departments involved in the Arctic covering their activities in the North. The report by the RCMP referred to the plans to open detachments at various points in the High Arctic. The report of the Department of Natural Resources and Development did not refer specifically to the High Arctic relocation but referred generally, among other things, to the role of the Department in planning transfers of Inuit from “over-populated, depleted areas to areas where game is more plentiful, or where employment may be found.”¹⁶⁹

It would appear that some senior officials did not consider that the Inuit had a role in the maintenance of Canadian sovereignty. A December 31, 1952 memorandum from the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs to his Minister, drawing attention to some of the prospective developments in the Arctic giving rise to concern about *de facto* sovereignty, places the concern in a context where the number of U.S. citizens in the Arctic could substantially outnumber non-Inuit Canadians in the Arctic.¹⁷⁰ In addition, a memorandum prepared by the Privy Council Office in May 1953 comparing Canadian government personnel with U.S. government personnel in the Arctic, omits any reference to Inuit special constables stationed at RCMP detachments in the Arctic and counts only the non-Inuit regular members.¹⁷¹ Other senior officials, however, did see a role for the Inuit. The Commissioner of the RCMP, at the February 16, 1953 Advisory Committee meeting, “asked if any thought had been given to the potential of the inhabitants of the north...training, development, adaptabilities, and so forth.” This was in the context of ensuring that civilian activities in the North were predominantly Canadian.

The terms of reference of the Administration Sub-Committee of the Advisory Committee would include the study of questions relating to the “employment of natives” and examining “the desirability of recommending arranged movements with a view to bettering their conditions”.¹⁷² It would appear that relocations were a matter of interest to the Advisory Committee, although the High Arctic

¹⁶⁸ MG30, E-133, series IV, file ACND to December 1953, vol. 1; document provided by Grant; also referred to by Gunther, pp. 54-55.

¹⁶⁹ MG30, e133, vol. 294, file “First Report 1953”; document provided by Grant; also referred to by Gunther, pp. 56-59.

¹⁷⁰ RG25, acc. 90-91/109, vol. 58, file 50197-40-1; document provided by Grant; also referred to by Gunther, p. 52.

¹⁷¹ MG30, e133, vol. 294, file ACND, 2.19.53, vol. 1; document provided by Grant.

¹⁷² April 13, 1953, ACND meeting, as quoted by Grant, vol. 1.

relocation would not be brought before the Advisory Committee except as an information item later in October 1953. It might also be observed that the predecessor to the Department of Natural Resources and Development had seen the 1934 relocation to Dundas Harbour as contributing to Canadian sovereignty and that the question of employing Inuit at Arctic stations was apparently discussed at the first meeting of the Advisory Committee in 1948 as well as at the Transportation Sub-Committee.¹⁷³

The Relocation Decision

On March 16, 1953, a number of projects, including the relocation to the High Arctic, were submitted by the Director, Northern Administration and Lands Branch, to the Deputy Minister for approval. The Deputy Minister's approval was apparently given by early April, which is when action began to be taken on the relocation.¹⁷⁴

It was decided that five Inuit families would be relocated to each of Cape Herschel, Craig Harbour and Resolute Bay, where the RCMP would be responsible for administering the Inuit and the trade store, which would be established using a loan from the Eskimo Loan Fund. A loan would be made to the leader of each group for an amount up to \$5,000. The goods obtained through the Loan Fund would be used as trade goods and also for filling relief and family allowance vouchers issued by the police.¹⁷⁵ The cost of transporting and equipping the Inuit to live in the High Arctic was estimated to be \$1,000 for each group and would be charged to the Department's Transportation of Eskimos and Relief accounts. The Inuit would come from "over-populated depressed areas", and the object would be to "establish them in the native way of life under the direction of the RCM Police". Since this was a government-initiated relocation, no Inuk had asked for a loan and no name was provided for the Inuk who would be charged with the loan. By contrast, a fourth project involved providing a loan at the request of Fred Carpenter for a group to go to Banks Island, an area that had long been exploited by Inuit from the Mackenzie Delta area in more prosperous times. One would expect a loan fund to make loans to people who requested them for their own commercial proposals. The significance of this is discussed later.

The relocation to Resolute Bay is put forward on the basis that at least one Inuk could be employed full-time to replace a mechanic and that one or two others

¹⁷³ Grant, Appendix C-ii.

¹⁷⁴ RG22, vol. 254, file 40-8-1, Part 3; document provided by Grant; also referred to by Gunther, pp. 163-165.

¹⁷⁵ The operation of the Loan Fund is described in Appendix 6. The directions given by the Department to the RCMP concerning the operation of the stores are discussed in the next chapter.

could be employed full-time on semi-skilled jobs, with all of the Inuit men being employed in menial jobs. It is said, however, that the Department would prefer at least part of the group “to hunt and trap after the native way so that the children of employed Eskimos can learn the native way of life with them”. Although the memorandum speaks of the prospects for employment in fairly definite terms, the prospective employers at Resolute Bay turned out to have other ideas when formally approached by the Department. The employment part of the plan fell apart.

There is nothing in the memorandum to the Deputy Minister with respect to having Inuit from Pond Inlet join the relocatees as stated in the January 12, 1953 letter to the Hudson’s Bay Company. Nor does the memorandum set out the manner in which the Inuit would be approached about the relocation, what would be said to them, or what representations, assurances, or promises would be given. Indeed, that subject is not discussed in any of the documents leading up to the decision. There is no consideration of the special care required when seeking consent from Inuit for such a project and no provision for maintaining contact with the homeland.

The memorandum to the Deputy Minister reflects the uncertainty in the project by describing it as a “pioneer experiment to determine if Eskimos can be induced to live on northern islands which, relics indicate once supported a native population”. However, the reasons for the uncertainty that appear in the January 12, 1953 letter to the Hudson’s Bay Company are not repeated in the memorandum to the Deputy Minister. There can be no certainty that the Deputy Minister would have been aware of the issues being discussed by his officials or that the Deputy Minister addressed his mind to the issue of how the Inuit were to be approached and what was to be said to them, since this topic does not figure in the documentation leading up to the Deputy Minister’s decision to approve the projects. However, this was not the first time the issue of relocations had come before the Deputy Minister.

The Stated Purpose of the Relocation

The stated purpose of the relocation was to establish Inuit from “overpopulated, depressed areas” in “the native way of life” in the new communities. The Deputy Minister would have understood that the reference to “over-populated” areas and establishing the people in the “native way of life” captured the economic problem that had led to the proposal for the relocations, namely the decline in Inuit incomes as a result of the collapse of fur prices. It would not be long, however, before the continual references in departmental memoranda to over-population in relation to available resources, or over-populated, depressed areas, would lead some to believe that this referred to an increasing population outstripping the available game resources. This view is expressed in a report by

Mr. Stead of the Department of Finance, who also participated in the Advisory Committee's activities following a September 1953 tour of the Arctic Islands, including Resolute Bay, where the relocatees had just arrived. Stead's perception of the relocation is that it resulted from an "increasing Eskimo population" at Inukjuak that had "been outrunning the food supply."¹⁷⁶

This idea also crept into the institutional memory of the Department. In 1960, Bent Sivertz, who was then Director, requested C.M. Bolger, Administrator of the Arctic, to give thought to the possible relocation of additional small groups of Inuit to the High Arctic. Bolger requested Alex Stevenson to prepare a reply for him. The reply memorandum, sent to the Director on November 15, 1960, comments as follows:

You will recall that part of the history of the migration scheme was one of a greatly increased population over-burdening a depleted game population.¹⁷⁷

There is little doubt that the ambiguity in the phrase "over-population in relation to available resources" became a source of confusion about the purpose of and justification for the relocation that continues to the present day. The ambiguity and the resulting confusion lies at the heart of the unresolved complaints of the relocatees. It is little wonder that the relocatees cannot reconcile their knowledge of the conditions at Inukjuak with statements that seek to justify the relocation in terms of concerns about potential famine or starvation.

Any question about whether the Deputy Minister would have understood the meaning of the term "over-population" is removed by further proposals in the March 1953 memorandum aimed at continuing the relocation of Inukjuak Inuit to other parts of the Quebec coast and the islands off Quebec. The description of these projects identifies clearly the nature of the "over-population" problem in the following terms:

The region around Port Harrison is over-populated in relation to the available country resources. Food supplies from the sea are scarce but white foxes are usually plentiful in good years. Many of the natives depend on food supplies purchased from the trading post from the proceeds of their white fox catch. Relief costs are high in poor fur years and with low fox prices some unsuccessful trappers are unable to support their families even in good fur years.

The Deputy Minister approved the continuation of relief expenditures for the purpose of continuing those more local relocations.

¹⁷⁶ Report on Tour of the Arctic Islands, September 8-12, 1953, RG22, vol. 176, file 40-2-20, Part 3; document provided by Grant; also referred to by Gunther, p. 242.

¹⁷⁷ Bolger to Director, 15.11.60, RG85, vol 1962, file A1012-13, Part 1; also N.W.T. Archives, Stevenson Papers; document provided by Grant; also referred to in part in Gunther, pp. 66-70.

The March 1953 memorandum to the Deputy Minister describes what was involved entirely accurately in terms of the people being “established in the native way of life” in the new High Arctic communities. The object plainly was not to move them to another place where they would be reliant on an income economy, with relief providing an important aspect of their livelihood when income expectations were not met because of downturns in the fur economy. Rather, the object was to move them to a place where they could increase their reliance on country food. The encouragement, guidance and direction provided by the local official, who by necessity would be an RCMP member, would ensure that the people would do what it was perceived they could do, namely increase their reliance on country food and make them less dependent on government support. This objective reflected a broad consensus among all those involved in northern affairs, both inside and outside government and including the Anglican and Roman Catholic missions, although there were significant differences of view about how this should be done.

The discussion of the continuation of the relief projects around Inukjuak, involving the relocation of Inuit to the offshore islands and other parts of the Quebec coast, provides an insight into the manner in which encouragement, guidance and direction from local officials were provided. The object of those projects was for the people to rely on country food, with the result that relief to support the projects was not used to provide food. “A good part of the supplies consisted of ammunition to enable these people to obtain seals for food and fuel. Issues of tea and tobacco were reduced to encourage these people to produce furs and oil for barter. It is proposed to follow the same procedure next fall.” In short, the government controlled the issue of relief supplies, and the nature and amount of supplies could be adjusted to provide the necessary encouragement to hunt for food. No one had a gun put to their head to force them to go hunting; basic economics and the imperative of survival achieved the desired objective. The link between increasing reliance on country food and decreasing the cost of relief is explicit in the discussion of these more local relocations, as is the link between self-reliance and improved morale. At the same time, the Department was prepared to incur costs for relief in this manner in the belief that it would contribute to self-reliance. This is what the Deputy Minister approved.

The other side of this kind of encouragement is found in the complaints of the Inuit relocatees that the police in the new communities were always telling them what to do and scolding them when they did not do what the police wanted.

The Coercive Nature of the Project

What was proposed in the High Arctic relocation was inherently coercive. It was a plan designed to take people who were accustomed to an income economy, with the goods that income could purchase, and put them in a situation where

they would have to rely more heavily on game food, with all the hardship such a life naturally involved.¹⁷⁸ There is not the least suggestion in the documentation that the project was described to the Inuit in this way before they were relocated. Indeed, it must be obvious that such a scheme would be contrary to the inclination of anyone who had become reliant to a significant degree on an income economy that operated with government support as a safety net. In fact, there are indications in the discussions leading up to the decision that officials recognized that the changes involved in the relocation were contrary to the inclination of the Inuit. It may be said, therefore, that securing Inuit participation in the relocation depended on *not* disclosing to the Inuit the true character of the relocation.

It must also be recognized that the overt signs of success of such a project, namely self-reliance, would not depend on the relocatees' state of mind. Even if the people were unhappy or had a desire to return home, they would still have to hunt. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that officials were reporting consistently that the relocatees were doing well while at the same time the relocatees speak of their unhappiness and their desire to return home.

The goods that could be obtained by trapping would form a supplement to what could be obtained from hunting, but hunting would be the safety net in poor fur years. Not all Inuit relied on income from trapping to the same extent. There were Inuit, such as Idlout, who lived largely from hunting, with income from trapping providing only a supplement, and who did not look to government support in poor fur years. The relocation scheme as planned might have been entirely satisfactory for such people. However, the relocation scheme, by its own terms, sought to relocate people who were more heavily dependent on an income economy and a safety net of government support. As a result, there is no suggestion in the decision that recruitment for the project should be limited to those who had continued to live relatively distant from trading posts, with income from trading providing only a supplement to what was obtained from hunting. This served only to add to the confusion that has developed about the goals and objectives of the relocation.

At the time the relocation decision was taken, Inukjuak was a substantial settlement, with a Hudson's Bay Company post, a police post, church missions, a school, a nursing station, a Department of Transport weather station and radio facility, and a port facility. Supplies for other points along the Quebec coast were off-loaded at Inukjuak and transported by whale boat to other destinations. Inuit in

¹⁷⁸ Ross Gibson, the RCMP member stationed at Resolute Bay in the first years of the relocation, has expressed the view that the Inukjuak Inuit were not the best suited for this relocation in the following terms: "I must stress that I don't think the Port Harrison Natives, to be perfectly frank with you, were the best of people to move into the north because they had become too dependent on the white man's way of life with their welfare and their child support and so on" (Thursday, June 17, 1993, Transcript of special consultation arranged by Commission counsel because Mr. Gibson was unable to attend the hearing, p. 50).

the area had acquired whale boats, and the ownership of such boats contributed significantly to social status and economic well-being. The school and the nursing station had been established relatively recently as part of continuing government efforts to remedy decades of neglect. The relocation decision was to create new communities that would have no schools, no nursing stations, and no missions. In this respect, the decision would turn the clock back to the era of neglect. It is no answer to point out that many communities in the Arctic did not receive nursing stations or schools for many years to come or that the benefit of the new facilities was not yet being felt by all Inuit in the Inukjuak area. The fact is that the Inukjuak area was beginning to benefit from new government programs and that these benefits, actual and potential, were taken away through the relocation. There is also the fact that such facilities afforded considerable employment. Willmott has reported that in the summer of 1958, the full-time employment generated by these facilities provided a livelihood for Inuit families totalling 75 men, women and children. These families obtained virtually all their food from their employers in the form of food rations in lieu of wages.

Finally, the decision was not influenced by reports of continuing improvement in the economic situation at Inukjuak. The RCMP report for the year ending December 31, 1952 stated that white foxes were building up to a peak, which was expected to be reached in the following year. Income from furs, handicrafts and some summer employment, together with favourable hunting conditions, had resulted in a marked decrease in relief. Relief issued by the Hudson's Bay Company had been used to outfit seven walrus and whale hunts, and government relief was being issued only to the sick, disabled, aged, and families with the head away in hospital. The general conditions of the Inuit were considered to be "not unsatisfactory to any extent".¹⁷⁹ Stevenson visited Inukjuak in July 1953 and reported on the improved conditions in similar terms.¹⁸⁰ Although the RCMP detachment at Inukjuak reported on the prevailing favourable conditions, this did not alter the general perception of an unsound economy given the fluctuations in fur prices and the cyclical nature of fox catches combined with the general increase in the cost of trade goods. The long-term prospect was, therefore, for continued reliance on government support. The RCMP report makes it clear that, to avoid issuing relief rations to those who were considered able to fend for themselves, a firm hand was employed. This approach was fully in accord with the Department's wishes.¹⁸¹ These actions were also clearly imposed on the people affected and included limiting access to relief food and dispersing people away from the post. The relocation decision was thus made in the context

¹⁷⁹ RG18, acc. 85-86/048, vol. 55, file TA500-8-1-13; document provided by Grant.

¹⁸⁰ Gunther, p. 122, quoting from "Inspection Tour...July 1953, etc.", RG85, vol. 207, file 201-1-8, Part 3.

¹⁸¹ Gunther, p. 122, fn. 16, referring to Cunningham to Larsen, 8.5.53, RG18, acc. 85-86/048, vol. 55, file TA500-8-1-13.

of practices that were overtly coercive, and the relocation scheme itself was inherently coercive in its objective and purpose. The Inuit relocatees have said that they felt coerced into relocating and felt subject to continual coercion in the new locations.

The concern on the part of administrators about Inuit relying too much on government 'handouts' was also a highly generalized concern. It was generalized in that it applied both to government support programs such as family allowance and old age security, which were universally available to all Canadians, and also to relief, which was available only in cases of hardship. Thus, the relocation scheme was aimed not only at changing expectations about relief but also discouraging reliance on universal programs. As will be seen, this would involve using administrative powers to restrict or withhold the benefit of payments available to all Canadians. The effect of this is seen in the relocatees' assertion that family allowance and old age security payments stopped after they left Inukjuak.

Concern about reliance on handouts was also generalized in the sense that it applied to all Inuit in Quebec. Yet it is clear that not all Inuit, even in the Quebec portion of the Arctic, were equally reliant on a combination of earned and unearned income. The relocatees were not all alike. Moreover, by 1953 conditions had improved considerably since the collapse of fur prices in 1949-50, and very few Inukjuak Inuit were receiving relief. Reports from Inukjuak in that period describe the people as generally hard-working in the face of sometimes difficult circumstances. Thus one finds resentment in the testimony of the relocatees about being labelled, incorrectly, as welfare cases, unwilling to look after themselves. Yet the government's generalized preoccupation about Inuit reliance on handouts and the understanding of local officials that this was a rehabilitation project could serve only to reinforce stereotypical attitudes that would adversely complicate relations between the relocatees and the local officials responsible for their well-being.

Conclusion

The information available to the government in the early 1950s does not indicate that the Inukjuak area was experiencing population growth. Nor was there any indication of a serious decline in food game resources. There was, however, concern about the long-term instability of the fur trade and the ability of the fur trade to sustain the income levels to which Inukjuak Inuit had become accustomed. Inukjuak Inuit were thought to be becoming dependent on 'handouts', with a consequent loss of self-reliance and moral decline. Greater reliance on hunting, with less reliance on the trade store, was seen to be the answer.

The goal of restoring Inuit self-reliance and independence through greater reliance on hunting involved restoring the Inuit to what was perceived to be

their proper state. In other words, the goal was 'rehabilitation'. The relocation plan was inherently coercive. It was a plan designed to take people who were accustomed to an income economy, with the goods that income could purchase, and place them in a situation where they would be made to rely more heavily on game food, with all the hardship that such a life naturally involved.

Implementing the Relocation

The plan, as approved by the Deputy Minister, was little more than a concept – a very general description of what was to be done and for what purpose. The detail would be worked out as the plan was implemented. This would mean that a large amount of discretion would be left to those implementing the decision. Time was short, and once the plan was put in motion, implementation would continue without regard to problems that had not been anticipated in the planning.

Action to implement the relocation decision began in the second week of April 1953. The action taken would result in the modification of the plan; the failure to obtain genuine consent from the Inukjuak relocatees; the forced separation of the relocatees into different groups; the relocatees arriving in the High Arctic lacking essential equipment and supplies; and instructions to the RCMP that would make the coercion inherent in the relocation a daily reality for the relocatees.

The Promise to Return is Added to the Plan

The Commissioner of the RCMP was advised of the decision on April 8, 1953; shortly thereafter, Larsen, the officer in command of “G” Division, communicated with the Pond Inlet, Inukjuak and Fort Chimo detachments. The message to the Inukjuak detachment referred to a proposal to relocate four families to Craig Harbour, Ellesmere Island, and three families to Cape Herschel, Ellesmere Island, to hunt and trap for a living under the supervision of RCMP

detachments. The detachment was asked to ascertain “whether any families are willing to go” and, if so, to provide particulars. The detachment was directed to explain conditions on Ellesmere Island carefully, particularly the two-month period of complete darkness, the other short days, and only annual visits by supply ships. The families were to be headed by “good energetic hunters”. The message advised that “Families will be brought home at the end of one year if they so desire.”¹⁸²

The promise of a return had not been in the plan approved by the Deputy Minister. Larsen introduced this on his own initiative, informing the Department in an April 14, 1953 memorandum. He advised the Department that he considered it advisable to make this promise in light of the “sad experience” of the families relocated to Dundas Harbour in 1934. “They suffered hardships and asked, from time to time to be taken back to Cape Dorset. They never were taken back...”.¹⁸³ There is nothing in the documentary material to indicate that Larsen’s instructions with respect to the promise were countermanded. In fact, Stevenson later reported, after speaking with two of the hunters who would go north, that the “Eskimo agreed that they would go north for a period of two years at least. Then if they are dissatisfied or unhappy in their new environment they could return to Port Harrison.”¹⁸⁴ The promise Stevenson referred to, however, was to return in two years rather than one.

Nowhere in the documentation is there any indication about how people would be returned if they asked. Nor is it clear what would count as a request that would cause the government to make good on the promise. In that regard, it has been said that the entire group at one of the new settlements would have to ask to be returned permanently before the government would take action.¹⁸⁵ In other words, individuals who were unhappy and wished to return permanently might not be considered as being covered by the promise. The documentation is also unclear about whether the promise was to be limited in time to one or two years or whether the promise could be called upon only after one or two years. One might also ask whether the content of the promise would cover someone who became homesick and wished to return home for a period of time but then go back to the North to rejoin friends and family there. Requests of that nature were made and, given what was known at the time about the attachment of Inuit to home and their social nature, it was predictable that people would wish to return home at least for visits.

¹⁸² RG85, vol. 1072, file 252-3, Part 1, 14.04.53; document provided by Grant; also referred to by Gunther, p. 170.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁴ Inspection Report, 1953, RG22, vol. 176, file 40-2-20; as quoted by Grant, vol. 1; also referred to by Gunther, p. 180.

¹⁸⁵ Presentation to the Commission by Mr. Bent Sivertz, June 29, 1993, Tr., vol. 2, pp. 446 and 458-459.

The Approach to the Inuit

The Department gave the RCMP no special instructions about how to approach the Inuit or how to secure their consent. Similarly, the memoranda from RCMP Headquarters to the detachments provide no such information other than the need to explain the difference in conditions in the High Arctic and the promise to return. No caution was given with respect to taking care to avoid raising expectations beyond reasonable levels. No advice was provided on how to ensure that the people understood that they had a choice in the matter and that this was not one more in a long series of government decisions in which Inuit compliance was expected. No instructions were given that would permit the true character of the scheme to be disclosed to the Inuit.

The RCMP member at Inukjuak, Ross Gibson, who carried out the instructions from Headquarters, had arrived in the Arctic for the first time the previous summer. Gibson used the Hudson's Bay Company interpreter. He was a good interpreter and was used by Gibson to ensure that the people understood what the move involved, including the dark period. He recalls that he went out and talked to the people, left the idea with them, and then, after they had considered the matter, they came back and talked to him.¹⁸⁶ He told the people about the dark period and that this might be difficult. He took a map with him to explain the distances. He recalls telling people that Inukjuak had always been a very poor area and told them of the advantages of going to the High Arctic where the game was plentiful. He considered it his responsibility to sell the people on the advantages of the project and considered that he was selling them something to their advantage. He told the people that they would be looked after and that they would have the support of the government.¹⁸⁷ Although Larsen's message to the detachment speaks of the possibility of return, Gibson says that he had no reason to make any promises about returning. He never thought of return. It is clear, however, that someone was the source of Inuit understanding that they would be brought home if they wished to return. Gibson believed that the people were going to the Bache Peninsula, on the east coast of Ellesmere Island. He did not know that he would be joining the relocation or that some of the relocatees would go to Resolute Bay where he would be in charge of the detachment. He considered that he was implementing instructions from people who were dedicated to securing a better way of life for the Inuit whom he believed to be living in poor circumstances in the Inukjuak area.

The government's objective of rehabilitation and the resulting 'experiment' to determine whether the relocatees could adjust to and survive in the High Arctic

¹⁸⁶ Thursday, June 17, 1993, Transcript of special consultation, pp. 47-48. Mr. Gibson died in August 1993.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 55, 45-46, and comments made by Mr. Gibson in a telephone link from the public hearing room to respond to questions from Commissioners, Monday, June 28, 1993, Tr., vol. 1, pp. 181-182.

were not communicated to the Inuit. This caused a major misunderstanding that is at the root of the relocatees' complaints.

The Information Communicated to the Inuit: The Offer of a Better Life?

As we saw in Chapter 3, some of the relocatees received more information than others, since only some of the relocatees were spoken to directly by the RCMP or other officials. A number of people recall being told only of the advantages of the project and not the disadvantages. They were left with the impression that they were going to a much more pleasant place. The younger hunters were excited by what they were told about the plentiful wildlife, including large land mammals. Not everyone who heard about the project went. Some people were prevented from going by their elders. Some people felt that they had no choice but to go because it was what the government wanted. There was a sense that the proposal was something the government considered a good thing and something the government wanted. All understood that they would be free to return.

Some of the differences in what people understood about the project can be explained by the fact that Gibson visited camps individually and did not speak to the community as a whole. A number of people, therefore, heard about the project from other Inuit and did not hear about it directly from Gibson or any other official.¹⁸⁸ The very high expectations about the nature and abundance of the game that would be available in the High Arctic appears to be the result of Gibson's enthusiastic sales effort. It will be recalled that the planning process took no account of the problem of obtaining genuine consent from the Inuit, continuing a long history of trading company and government decisions that were simply imposed on the Inuit. As discussed, no instructions were provided to Gibson with regard to the need to take special care to obtain genuine consent.

The Inukjuak relocatees came from three camps around Inukjuak. One was five miles from the settlement, a second was on an island fifteen miles from the settlement, and a third was fifty miles from the settlement.¹⁸⁹

Although the government intended that Pond Inlet Inuit should join the Inukjuak relocatees, there is nothing to indicate that this was communicated to the Inukjuak relocatees or that the purpose was explained. In fact, the Inukjuak relocatees have said that they were surprised to find themselves joined by the

¹⁸⁸ Gibson took with him a good interpreter, Tommy Palisser, although some Inuit also received information on the project from an Inuit Special Constable who was not a very good interpreter. Marjorie Hinds, the teacher, also spoke to some of the relocatees, and she believes they understood the new conditions they would face, although her Inuktitut was limited. In that regard, a verbal description of a new environment does not always have the same impact on understanding as the experience itself.

¹⁸⁹ Gunther, p. 173.

Pond Inlet Inuit. There are significant differences between the Inukjuak and Pond Inlet dialects, as well as differences in their way of living. The Inukjuak and Pond Inlet groups did not get along well in the new communities. Although the government's desire was to have Pond Inlet Inuit involved in the relocation to assist in the adjustment to High Arctic conditions, this idea failed to take into account the disruptive effect caused by putting the different groups together in an isolated community.

The government was offering the Inuit a better life. This is what comes through Gibson's description of how he approached Inuit about the relocation. Yet there was nothing in any of the instructions given by the Department to RCMP Headquarters or by RCMP Headquarters to the Inukjuak detachment that the rehabilitative character of the project – the goal of changing people's way of life from a significantly income-based economy to a hunting-based economy – should be explained to the Inuit. In other words, no direction was given about explaining how the project could fundamentally change the lives of the relocatees. In the absence of any such explanation, a message that they were being offered a better life in the High Arctic could only mean a life in which they would enjoy everything they had and more. Yet what they were being offered was less than what they had – there would be less access to store supplies in the High Arctic and greater reliance on hunting, with all the uncertainty and hardship that involved. The true character of the project was not disclosed to the Inuit. The impact of the change in the way of life of the Inuit is reflected in Inuit complaints that they were abandoned by the government in the High Arctic and suffered considerable distress when their expectations of a significantly better life were not met.

When all these circumstances are taken into account, it cannot be said that the Inukjuak relocatees gave free or informed consent to the relocation.

The Pond Inlet Inuit

Larsen's April 14, 1953 message to the Pond Inlet detachment contained similar instructions to those sent to the Inukjuak detachment, with the exception that only three Inuit families from Pond Inlet were to be relocated, one family to Craig Harbour and two families to Cape Herschel on the east coast of Ellesmere Island.¹⁹⁰ There was nothing in the message to indicate that the Pond Inlet people were to assist the Inuit from Inukjuak. The message refers to the earlier expression of interest by Idlout and suggests that Idlout could help in identifying others who might wish to move. The Pond Inlet relocatees have said that they were approached by Idlout. Nothing is said in the message about compensation for the Pond Inlet Inuit. It appears that the expectation was that they would be

¹⁹⁰ Cape Herschel, Cape Sabine, Alexandra Fiord and the Bache Peninsula are in the same general area on the east coast of Ellesmere Island.

content to have the opportunity to hunt and trap in a new area, which is what Idlout had been seeking to do. However, the Pond Inlet Inuit found themselves providing a service to the government by giving guidance to the Inukjuak Inuit. They expected to be paid for this service but were not. Given that the government was recruiting the Pond Inlet Inuit to provide assistance, with a view to promoting the success of a government-initiated program, it was incumbent on the government to ensure that the conditions under which the Pond Inlet Inuit were participating were made clear to them. This was not done. The responsibility for misunderstandings falls on the government.

The Fort Chimo Inuit are Dropped from the Plan

The April 14, 1953 message to the Fort Chimo detachment was somewhat different from the other messages. It emphasizes the opportunities for permanent employment for Inuit at the base as truck drivers and equipment operators, with hunting and trapping referred to as spare-time activities. The detachment was instructed to identify families with members who had experience as equipment drivers and were willing to go. It was stated that living conditions at Resolute Bay were favourable; this appears to refer to the prospects for housing identified in the report of the staff sergeant who visited Resolute Bay in December 1952. The emphasis on employment is consistent with the project as approved by the Deputy Minister. It will be recalled that the people at Fort Chimo had had substantial employment at the air base during the war and had gained experience as truck drivers and heavy equipment operators.

The issue of housing for the people from Fort Chimo would eventually lead to their being dropped from the relocation. The plan approved by the Deputy Minister makes no reference to housing, even though the Deputy Minister had, in February 1953, received a copy of the staff sergeant's report indicating that housing would be required for relocatees going to Resolute Bay. The Fort Chimo detachment would soon report that there were Inuit willing to go, but they wished to know whether they would have houses because they were used to living in houses.¹⁹¹ In the result, it was decided that the Fort Chimo Inuit would not be relocated. The Department had not intended to provide housing for relocated Inuit. The original plan of the Department had failed to accommodate the characteristics of the Fort Chimo Inuit, who, as a result of employment at the air base there, were now accustomed to living in houses.

Forced Separation: The Decision to Send Some of the Inukjuak Families to Resolute Bay

When the Fort Chimo Inuit were dropped from the relocation, it was decided that Inuit from Inukjuak would go to Resolute Bay instead. However, by this

¹⁹¹ RG22, vol. 254, file 40-8-1, Part 3; document provided by Grant.

time the names of the Inukjuak relocatees had already been sent to Ottawa, and they had been approached on the basis that they were all going to Ellesmere Island, with Gibson believing that they were going to one location only, the Bache Peninsula, rather than two locations on Ellesmere Island, including Craig Harbour. The plan, as it had evolved, would now involve the seven Inukjuak families being divided among three locations in the High Arctic, with one Pond Inlet family at each location. This was not communicated to the Inukjuak families until they were already on the *C.D. Howe* in the High Arctic; they were separated into three groups and placed aboard ships going to different locations. The relocatees have communicated very clearly how painful and distressing this separation was for them. This was, in the circumstances, clearly a forced separation.

Furthermore, this forced separation undermines any argument that the relocation was voluntary, in that any consent that could be said to have been given related to Ellesmere Island, not the separation of families between Ellesmere Island and Cornwallis Island.

Opposition to the Plan and the Department's Determination to Proceed

The prospects for employment at Resolute Bay would dissolve in the face of bad planning, namely, the failure of the Department to consult properly with the proposed employers. It was only on June 15, 1953 that the Deputy Minister wrote to the Deputy Minister of Transport, to the Controller, Air Services, Meteorological Division of the Department of Transport, and to the Deputy Minister of National Defence to make inquiries about job opportunities at Resolute Bay.¹⁹² This was more than two months after the decision had been made to proceed with the relocation. The reply sent on behalf of the Deputy Minister of Transport, dated July 27, 1953, held out little prospect of employment.¹⁹³

The July 30, 1953 reply from the Deputy Minister of National Defence expressed concern that the "experiment will result in hardship on the Eskimo families concerned and that the RCAF will likely be faced with the problem of tendering care for which they are unprepared. Possibly the concern...might have been avoided if this department had been represented at some of your preliminary discussions on this experiment."¹⁹⁴ The Department of National Defence would express considerable misgivings about employing Inuit at Resolute Bay.

¹⁹² Young to Lessard, Thompson, and Drury, RG22, vol. 254, file 40-8-1, Part 4; referred to in Grant, vol. 1.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

In the face of opposition from the RCAF, the Department of Resources and Development quickly abandoned the employment aspect of the plan, notwithstanding that the plan as approved by the Deputy Minister had emphasized employment in relation to the relocation to Resolute Bay.

At an August 10, 1953 meeting with the RCAF, the Department described the relocation in terms of the desire to relocate northern Quebec Inuit to more prosperous areas from an area where they could not obtain a reasonable standard of living.

The RCAF was assured that all the people were volunteers who had been told about the environment and conditions in the High Arctic and that the possibility of securing employment had not been an important factor in deciding where the Inuit should be settled. The people were described as primarily hunters, with the main purpose of the experiment being to see whether they could adapt to conditions in the High Arctic and secure a living from the land.

The Department had reason to believe that there was sufficient marine life to support the Inuit families but that "No one could say for sure that this was the case and, consequently, the experiment was being staged." Mr. Sivertz added that "the Canadian Government is anxious to have Canadians occupying as much of the north as possible and it appeared that in many cases the Eskimo were the only people capable of doing this." The RCAF was assured that the relocatees would not become a burden on the RCAF. The Department was not able to tell the RCAF how many families would be going to Resolute Bay, since "this would be decided on the boat taking the Eskimo to their destination. It was not desirable to break up family groups if possible."¹⁹⁵ The Inukjuak Inuit were already aboard ship at that time, and even the planners did not know who would be going where.

The plan approved by the Deputy Minister in early April 1953 was clearly very fluid. Even the objectives were changing as the plan was implemented. This is indicative, not of good planning, but of a determination to implement the plan once it had been set in motion, without regard to matters that should have been incorporated in the planning process. The time frame within which the Department was operating, with a decision made in early April and the short shipping season coming up, left little time to take account of the issues that would arise as the plan was put into effect.

¹⁹⁵ Minutes of meeting held August 10, 1953, RG22, vol. 254, file 40-8-1, Part 4; document provided by Grant; also referred to by Gunther, pp. 108 and 235-236. In his presentation to the Commission, Mr. Sivertz said that sovereignty had nothing to do with the relocation and that when he spoke of Canadianizing the North at the August 1953 meeting, it was with a view to having activities in the North done by Canadians rather than by people from other countries. He saw the relocation as nothing more than Canadianizing the North (Tuesday, June 29, 1993, Tr., vol. 2, pp. 426-429).

Problems with Supplies and Equipment

Supply orders for the stores that were to be established at each of the new locations were sent out by the Department in mid-May 1953. The supplies were the same for each location, were very basic and were also limited to the \$5,000 provided through the Loan Fund for each store. Foodstuffs were primarily flour, sugar, tea, and lard.¹⁹⁶ The basic food ordered for the stores was consistent with what would be found at a trading post supplying a community of Inuit living by hunting and trapping. The amount of the loan – \$5,000 for each store – was, however, intended to provide one year's supplies only. There does not appear to have been any provision for the purchase of supplies to be held in reserve in case supply problems arose, as sometimes happened in the Arctic. Nor is there any indication in the plan about what would happen to the amount of the loan if the communities increased in size. As things turned out, the amount of the loans proved inadequate, particularly at Craig Harbour/Grise Fiord, so supplies available at the trade stores were inadequate as well. In addition, there were problems resulting in supplies failing to arrive from time to time.¹⁹⁷

Supplies ordered for each of the three trading stores included 150 caribou skins suitable for making clothing and 50 additional caribou skins for use as bedding. The total required was 600 skins. In that regard, the Inukjuak Inuit had been reported as having little access to caribou and were using either store clothing or clothing made from caribou skins purchased at the trade store. In addition, access to caribou in the High Arctic was, in the early years at least, restricted for conservation reasons. At the end of May 1953, the Hudson's Bay Company advised that it would be unable to supply any skins. It could only supply 150 sinews which are used for sewing skins.¹⁹⁸ This was very late in the implementation process to learn that the bedding and clothing materials needed in the High Arctic could not be provided. Bedding and clothing are not small items for people who must live on the land.

Notwithstanding the absence of these essential supplies, the project continued. The 150 sinews were purchased, and when Stevenson was at Inukjuak on his inspection tour late in June, he purchased 60 skins from the Hudson's Bay Company and made arrangements to have the cost of these charged to relief and delivered to the Inuit aboard ship.¹⁹⁹ Thus, just 60 skins were available for clothing

¹⁹⁶ Gunther, pp. 203-209.

¹⁹⁷ Trade stores everywhere in the Arctic occasionally ran low on supplies when demand was forecast incorrectly. The problem with the trade stores in the High Arctic, however, related to inadequate funding, resulting in chronically inadequate supplies. In addition, the Department took on responsibility for arranging for the supplies that were to be sent in each year. Ensuring that supplies were delivered each year thus became the responsibility of the Department.

¹⁹⁸ Nichols of the Hudson's Bay Company to Cantley, May 26, 1953; document provided by Grant.

¹⁹⁹ Grant, vol. 1; Gunther, p. 212, although Gunther incorrectly interprets the order for 150 sinews as an order for 150 skins.

and bedding for the coming year. An attempt was made to compensate for this by giving people the mattresses they had been using aboard ship when they disembarked.²⁰⁰

Stevenson went to Inukjuak in June 1953 and was instructed by Cantley to see that "all these families have good tents and that they have sufficient clothing and other equipment to take care of their needs until such time as the supplies at their destinations can be opened up." Any supplies that were issued would be charged against the relief account.²⁰¹ The teacher, Ms. Hinds, also reported that she was helping people get ready for the move.²⁰² The intent, therefore, was that people be properly outfitted before going north. As it turned out, however, the relocatees arrived without all the equipment they would need for life in the High Arctic.

The Issue of Medical Examinations

The annual supply ship, which provided the means for taking the relocatees north, carried medical personnel who conducted medical examinations at each point of call. The relocatees, like all Inuit at the various points of call, were to be given medical examinations. Markoosie Patsauq has said that he was infected with tuberculosis. This was not detected. He was relocated to Resolute Bay and believes that he then infected several other relocatees, resulting in many people being taken to hospital in the south and contributing to the hardship experienced in the new community.

The normal procedure would have resulted Markoosie Patsauq being sent to hospital instead of being relocated to Resolute Bay if a medical examination had detected tuberculosis. When the *C.D. Howe* arrived at Inukjuak in 1953, the x-ray machine was broken. It was repaired later in the voyage and x-rays were taken. It appears that there was some confusion or breakdown in the procedures in this case. It should also be remembered that doctors need their patients to assist them in coming to an accurate diagnosis.

The Department's Instructions to the RCMP Detachments in the High Arctic

A memorandum was prepared by the Department for the RCMP detachments at Craig Harbour and Resolute Bay to give guidance on operations at the new

²⁰⁰ Cantley to Doyle, 21.12.53, RG85, vol. 316, file 201-1, Part 29, referred to in William D. Kemp, "The Relocation of Inuit from the Port Harrison Region of Hudson Bay to the High Arctic Communities of Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord: A Background Document" (Makivik Research Department, September 2, 1982).

²⁰¹ Gunther, pp. 177-178, quoting Cantley to Stevenson, 8.6.53, RG85, vol. 80, file 201-1-(28).

²⁰² Gunther, pp. 173-177.

settlements. This information was not provided to the relocatees before they were relocated.

The instructions to the RCMP specified that the Inuit should set up their camps away from the settlement, at places where hunting conditions would be favourable, to give them the best chance of procuring their own food from the land. At the same time, the RCMP members were to enforce conservation measures to ensure that the Inuit did not take more than they actually needed and, in particular, to ensure that resources were not depleted. Musk-ox were not to be hunted.²⁰³ As a result, the possibilities for hunting were not unlimited. The relocatees have said that they were disappointed when they found that their ability to hunt was restricted by the RCMP. This contributed to their expectations not being met, particularly in respect of large land mammals such as caribou.

The RCMP were directed to provide assistance and guidance so that the relocatees from northern Quebec could make a better living for themselves in the High Arctic. The instructions stated that the Pond Inlet Inuit were joining the group to provide the benefit of their experience in helping the northern Quebec Inuit become accustomed to the new environment and the differences in hunting and living conditions.

The police were directed to have one of the Inuit sign the necessary documents under the Loan Fund, but the police were to operate the store and maintain all the accounts.²⁰⁴ It seems clear that the arrangements for the loan had not been discussed with the relocatees before departure and that it was intended that the police would deal with the matter of the loan once the people had landed. It is also clear that the signature of one of the Inuit as the borrower and trader would be a formality, since the substantive work would be handled by the police. This is an astonishing way for a loan to be handled and a debt created. In essence, the Loan Fund was being put to departmental uses, with an Inuk signing a loan agreement as a formality. It was a formality not in the sense of being good form legally, but as something perfunctory and lacking in substance. The full impact of this is evident in the fact that the Inuk who, notionally, had applied for the loan for the purpose of a commercial venture – the establishment of the trade store – had no control over the operation of the store.

The Department was to provide price lists for goods sold through the stores. The prices included a mark-up on the cost to take care of handling and other charges and “to allow for a reasonable profit on the operations.” It is not clear why there should be a profit on goods purchased under a loan that, notwithstanding the formality of an individual borrower’s signature, was in effect a debt that the entire new community would be repaying.

²⁰³ RG85, vol. 1070, file 251-4, Part 1.

²⁰⁴ The operation of the Loan Fund in relation to the stores is described in Appendix 6.

The police were directed that every effort should be made “to keep the Eskimos self-supporting and independent.” Relief was to be provided only when individuals were temporarily unable to provide for themselves. In other words, if the police considered that it was possible for a person to hunt, relief was not to be issued.

The memorandum also directed that no credit be issued and that all transactions be on a barter basis. In other words, the common practice at trading posts of grubstaking a trapper by providing supplies on credit in anticipation of future receipt of furs was not to apply. This was the practice at the trading post at Inukjuak. This direction was clearly intended to increase reliance on hunting and decrease reliance on the trading post. It was another aspect of the project that was not disclosed in advance to the relocatees.

The memorandum advised that the goods that had been sent in were the staples considered necessary for the first year’s operations. Care would have to be taken to ensure that the supplies were distributed equitably to the various families over the year. Each family was to be allowed to purchase only what they reasonably required for their current needs. As a result, even though it was recognized that people would have various sources of income, including trapping, employment, family allowance, old age assistance, old age security, or blind pensions, their level of income would bear no relation to what they could purchase on a current basis. Rather, any excess over what the family was permitted to buy at the store would be “set aside as savings or for making special purchases in the following year”.

For example, a family allowance payment could end up as a simple book entry in the accounts kept by the police and would not involve any goods being issued to an Inuit family. This is why the relocatees thought their family allowances and old age pensions stopped after they left Inukjuak. The government would make a family allowance payment, but the benefit of that payment would not necessarily reach the family except in the form of a credit on the store’s books. If there were not sufficient goods in the store to issue the family allowance benefit, then the family allowance would be recorded as compulsory savings in the accounts kept by a local official. If goods issued to an Inuit family were charged against family allowance, there would be no way for the recipient to know this unless they understood how the accounts were being kept. The same would happen with old age pensions and earned income.²⁰⁵

As will be seen, the operation of the Loan Fund and the purchase of supplies through the Loan Fund became a source of considerable difficulty. As a further observation, it should be noted that there is not the least suggestion that the Inuit were consulted about establishing a compulsory savings scheme for family

²⁰⁵ At Inukjuak, for example, where there was a Hudson’s Bay Company store, the police would give Inuit tokens representing a family allowance payment that could be taken to the store and used to obtain goods or gain credit. There was, therefore, a visible sign of the payment.

allowance, old age pensions and earnings that exceeded the limited goods available through the stores.

The operation of the store would require the police to maintain a separate account for each customer; a separate account for amounts charged against the stock to cover wages from employers paid in kind; a separate account for each family receiving family allowance and the goods issued against the family allowance payment; a separate account for relief payments; and the use of counter slips to record all transactions. Old age pensions were not mentioned specifically. These accounting procedures would become a source of confusion over time. In that regard, the fact that, given the stores' limited stock, there was no direct relationship between wages payable and goods issued from the store required the maintenance of accounts to keep track of any credit on account of wages, family allowance, etc. However, no such accounts were expressly identified in the instruction. This was bound to lead to problems.

The Eskimo Loan Fund was a revolving fund; the Department kept track only of the total amount loaned, the amounts repaid, and the balance outstanding on each loan. All the detailed accounts involved in operating a commercial venture such as a store under a normal loan arrangement would be the responsibility of the store operator. If proper accounts were not kept, individual customers of the store might not receive full credit for items traded, earnings paid in kind, family allowances or old age pensions paid in kind. As discussed, however, these were not normal commercial loans. The Loan Fund was being put to departmental purposes, and the importance of the distinction between operation of the Fund as a whole and the operation of the stores with the various accounts was blurred.

In carrying out these directions, the RCMP would be acting as representatives of the Department. This was consistent with the role of the RCMP at the time. The RCMP acted as general agents for the government in many matters in addition to law enforcement. In a nutshell, all the small elements of coercion – the 'encouragement' to hunt, the firm hand on relief supplies, the absence of credit at the store, the rationing of supplies, the forced savings, control over the complex and confusing accounts, the imposition of conservation restrictions, keeping the Inuit camp and the settlement separated, and other such matters – would fall on the shoulders of the RCMP members in the new communities. One sees the effects of this in the resentment expressed by many of the relocatees toward the RCMP. The coercive elements of the scheme designed by the Department became doubly coercive when executed by a police officer. At the same time, from the perspective of the RCMP members, they were carrying out their instructions with a view to making a success of a project that they had been told was intended for the betterment of the Inuit relocatees. Cley Fryer, who was with the RCMP at Craig Harbour in 1953-54, would write in 1954 about the success of the "Rehabilitation Program of Eskimo at Craig Harbour".²⁰⁶

²⁰⁶ February 1954 article in the *RCMP Quarterly*.

The coercion inherent in the relocation objectives would thus follow through to the instructions given to the police.

Conclusion

The Deputy Minister approved little more than a concept, leaving a large amount of discretion to those implementing the decision. Even the objectives were modified during implementation. Once the plan was set in motion, it was implemented without regard to matters that should have been addressed in the planning process and without regard for the hardship that shortcomings in planning would cause the relocatees.

The promise to return was added during the implementation of the plan. No plan was developed by the Department to give effect to the promise. The content of the promise was never clearly defined.

The ‘rehabilitative’ character of the relocation, with its potential to change their lives fundamentally, was not disclosed to the Inukjuak Inuit. They were told instead that they were going to a better place. No special care was taken by the Department to ensure, given known cultural factors, that genuine free and informed consent was obtained from the relocatees. Expectations were raised unreasonably. The “better life” expected by the relocatees was very different from the “better life” contemplated by the Department. This misunderstanding lies at the root of the relocatees’ complaints.

There is no evidence that arrangements for loans from the Eskimo Loan Fund were discussed with the relocatees before their departure. The Loan Fund was in fact being put to departmental purposes, with an Inuk signing for the loan as a formality, not in the sense of being good legal form, but in the sense of something perfunctory and lacking in substance.

The Inukjuak Inuit understood that they were all going to the same place. Instead, they were separated and sent to different places. This was, in the circumstances, clearly a forced separation.

The Inukjuak Inuit were not told that they would be joined by Pond Inlet Inuit or why the Pond Inlet Inuit would be involved. This aspect of the plan failed to take into account the disruptive effect of putting different groups together in isolated communities.

The participation of the Pond Inlet Inuit was intended to assist in the success of the relocation by helping the Inukjuak Inuit adjust to conditions in the High Arctic. They expected to be paid for this service but were not. The terms of their participation were not made clear at the outset. The government had the responsibility to ensure that the terms of participation were clear and should now accept responsibility for the misunderstanding that resulted.

An Assessment of Life in the New Locations

The relocatees have spoken of the hardships they suffered. Hardship was the inevitable consequence of the relocation scheme. The hardship would be aggravated by further government failings. In this chapter we discuss the hardships that resulted from the relocation objective and the means chosen to achieve that objective as well as from the later failings.

The Different Environment in the New Communities

The relocatees arrived in the High Arctic late in the summer season. Those who went to Craig Harbour landed in two groups in late August and early September 1953.²⁰⁷ Those who went to Resolute Bay landed in early September 1953. They would have little time to prepare for the coming winter.

The environment of the new communities was considerably different from Inukjuak. In addition to the dark period, the annual mean average temperatures at Craig Harbour were 12°F below the temperatures at Inukjuak. At Resolute Bay the average temperatures were 16°F below those at Inukjuak.

Craig Harbour is an area of rugged terrain, with steep-walled valleys, heights of land to 4,000 feet and many glaciers. It is treeless, with grass, small willows and Arctic flowers in some of the valleys. Freeze-up lasts from mid-September until late July or early August, with temperatures going below -40°F in March.

²⁰⁷ A second group was landed at Craig Harbour after the ship carrying them could not get through to Cape Herschel.

Snowfall is light, with infrequent blizzards. Water is obtained in the summer from streams and in the winter from grounded icebergs. Game is of various sorts: caribou, musk-ox, polar bear, fox, white whale, seals, ptarmigan, gulls, terns, loons and, occasionally, lake trout and Arctic char.

Resolute Bay is in a hilly area on the coast, with a flat table land interior of shale. There are numerous lakes with moss around them. There are no trees. Freeze-up is from mid-September to late July. Snowfall is light, with frequent blizzards. Rain and fog are common in the navigation season. Game includes caribou, musk-ox, polar bear, fox, white whale, seals, ptarmigan, ducks, geese and Arctic char.²⁰⁸

Neither Craig Harbour nor Resolute Bay is in an area of recent Inuit habitation. The area was inhabited centuries ago, but it is not known why those early settlements were abandoned.

In the relocatees' home community of Inukjuak, there had been many varieties of plants, including three kinds of edible berries. Moss and willow twigs were burned for heat, and willow twigs were used for matting under the skins used for bedding. Wood was available in the form of driftwood and scrap lumber. In summer, wildlife was plentiful, with three types of seals, many Canada and blue geese, three varieties of ducks, some sea pigeons, gulls and terns, and an occasional great loon. The three main fish were white fish, char and trout. Other varieties of fish, including sculpin, were used as dog food in the summer. White whales were taken in the summer, and the Hudson's Bay Company and the RCMP organized walrus hunts to the offshore islands. A few walrus and polar bears were taken, with walrus used as dog food.

During the winter the Inukjuak men ran trap lines, catching mostly white fox but also other fur-bearing animals such as wolverine, otter, mink, and muskrat. Caribou were hunted in the interior, with approximately 100 taken a year until 1956 on trips into the Ungava. In 1956 and subsequent years, the hunting of caribou was prohibited. The population around Inukjuak until 1953 was estimated to be stable at around 500 people. Visiting was the most important social activity. A number of large boats were owned by Inuit and were an important part of the economic activity of the community, including hunting. The trade store played an important role in the life of Inuit living in camps around the community. It was estimated that in 1958 as much as 50 per cent of the food consumed annually in Inuit camps was obtained from the trade store, although the proportion varied with the seasons. In summer, with the great variety and number of fish and game available, less store food was used.

²⁰⁸ The detailed information upon which this chapter is based is summarized and referenced in the Supporting Summary.

Isolation and the Experimental Aspect of the Relocation

The move to the High Arctic thus involved significant changes for the Inukjuak relocatees. There were no Inuit settlements at Craig Harbour and Resolute Bay. Three Inukjuak families would form the community at Resolute Bay together with one Pond Inlet family. Four Inukjuak families would form the community at Craig Harbour together with two Pond Inlet families. In addition, there were two Inuit special constables posted to Craig Harbour with their families. They also came from Pond Inlet. The Resolute Bay Inuit camp was situated several miles from the base, and strict rules were in place to restrict contact between the base and the camp. At Craig Harbour, the Inuit camp would be located forty miles from the post on the Lindstrom Peninsula. The Pond Inlet and Inukjuak groups did not socialize well.

There were therefore three aspects to the isolation. There was isolation from home and the larger community at Inukjuak, with separation from immediate family, extended family, and many friends who had remained at Inukjuak as well as from the facilities that supported that community. There was isolation from those non-Inuit facilities that did exist in the new communities. There was the isolation created by the differences between the Inukjuak and Pond Inlet groups.

For the Inukjuak relocatees, the area was also significantly different from Inukjuak in terms of climate, terrain, hunting conditions and the types and variety of game and fish. This would require the Inukjuak relocatees to adapt their hunting techniques to the new conditions, to learn where and when game of various types could be obtained most readily, and to adjust their equipment to the different terrain, particularly in the Craig Harbour area. They would also have to adjust their diet to the changes in available game. At Craig Harbour, the Inukjuak Inuit would have to learn how to take water from grounded icebergs, which required learning how to distinguish between freshwater and saltwater ice. The Inukjuak Inuit were also used to burning wood, and although wood could be found in the base dump at Resolute Bay, at the Lindstrom Peninsula site, seal oil lamps were the only means of cooking and providing heat. This was coupled with more severe climate conditions. The more severe the weather, the shorter the days and the longer the period of darkness, the more difficult it is to carry out tasks in the Arctic. The dark period also requires psychological adjustment.

The Inukjuak Inuit found the situation and the adjustment required for survival very difficult. It was much harder than they expected. No one in government knew how difficult the adjustment would be when planning the relocation or even whether the adjustment would be successful. The relocation was an experiment, as candidly recognized in the August 10, 1953 meeting with the RCAF. There it was acknowledged that the project was “an experiment”, with only a small number of Inuit being sent north to see whether they could adjust success-

fully and with a view to increasing the size of the communities if the first relocatees were successful.

How success would be measured is itself a controversial question, since the need to survive would require the relocatees to make a 'success' of the relocation if at all possible, no matter how much distress and unhappiness they might suffer. However, it is clear that the ability to make a living from hunting, was central to the plan and that the question in administrators' minds was whether the Inuit would be able to make a living on the land; this involved both the capacity of the land to support the Inuit and the ability of the Inuit to adapt to the new land. No one knew the answer to either part of the question.

There was therefore real risk to life and health attached to the project if it turned out that the land could not support the Inuit or if the Inuit had severe difficulty in learning how to exploit the resources of the new land.²⁰⁹ This risk would have become a reality at the Cape Herschel site if that aspect of the relocation had gone ahead; game failed to materialize in the Cape Herschel area in the winter of 1953-54, and the land would not have been able to support the relocatees. Supplies ordered for the trade stores were not sufficient to support the people; they were intended only to supplement what they could obtain from hunting. There would therefore have been a real crisis if hunting had not produced sufficient food. There is no indication of any contingency plan having been developed. The planners apparently would cross that bridge if and when they got to it, as they did with various other problems that arose in implementing the relocation.

The inherent riskiness of the project was not discussed with the Inuit. They were simply assured that there was abundant game in the High Arctic and that they would have a better life. This adds further support to the conclusion that the Inuit did not give free and informed consent to the relocation.

The uncertainty and risk attached to the project carry with them, by necessary implication, the right of the relocatees to be returned home at their request. As noted, there was uncertainty about whether the land could support the people and about whether the Inuit could adapt to life in the new land. Successful adaptation, as a matter of common sense, must include more than the mere physical capacity to survive. It must also involve an element of acceptance of the new land and a willingness to continue to face the challenges of adaptation to the new environment. Only they could determine whether the new land was accept-

²⁰⁹ Professor Orkin, in his presentation to the Commission, saw the relocation as a human experiment in that there was uncertainty and risk associated with the project, involving the lives and health of people, and the Department would derive knowledge from the relocation that it could use for other projects. These were the elements of the project that, to use the Department's own words, made this an experiment. However, Professor Orkin's central point is the need for consent to the relocation. He saw the experimental aspects of the project as one way, but not the only way, of analyzing the issue of consent.

able and whether they were willing to continue to face the risks and challenges of their new situation. If they decided their new situation was not acceptable, and if they were no longer willing to continue, then the question of whether the Inuit could adapt would have been answered and the experiment would be over. The Inuit would have to be returned home just as much as if the experiment had failed because the land could not support the people. As will be seen, in 1956, the Deputy Minister of the Department spoke of the possibility that the relocatees might not be content to stay in the High Arctic in terms that indicated this would lead to the relocatees being returned and the failure of the project. As a result, quite apart from the promises made to the relocatees, the uncertainty and risk inherent in the project implied the right of the relocatees to request a return home and the obligation of the government to return them. Continuing consent to the relocation was required.

Steps Taken to Remedy Failures in Implementing the Plan

The hardships associated with learning to survive in the new areas were compounded by failures in implementing the plan. For example, as discussed in the previous chapter, only 60 skins instead of 600 were available for clothing and bedding, which are critical items for life in the High Arctic. In early December, Corporal Sergeant at Craig Harbour requested that 200 skins be sent in as soon as possible because the people required clothing, particularly the children. The response from the Department was that the RCAF would drop these, if possible, "sometime during the winter". The Department was not acting with the urgency demanded by the situation.

It must be emphasized that the RCAF had no direct responsibility for the relocatees. The relocatees were the responsibility of the Department. The RCAF had not been involved in the planning, and when they learned of the relocation and expressed concern, they were assured that the relocation would not place a burden on them. Yet only a few months later the Department would look to the RCAF for help in dropping supplies to the relocatees. There would, however, be limits on the willingness of the RCAF to help the Department. As will be seen, in 1956, when supplies did not arrive at Resolute Bay, the RCAF were prepared to assist, provided agreement could be reached on cost recovery. The Department was not in a position to cover the full cost, however, with the result that only a small amount of supplies ultimately reached Resolute Bay.

Shortly after the relocatees arrived at Resolute Bay in 1953, it was found that some of the supplies intended for the trading store had not been delivered. These included rifles, blue denim, and tent material, as well as lumber. Some items that were in fact delivered, such as cotton drill and white duffel, were reported as not having been delivered because they were not found immediately on arrival and would be found only later. Efforts were made to trace the missing supplies, and replacements for the rifles, tent material and blue denim were

flown in by the RCAF sometime after January 1954, more than five months after they should have arrived. Ten bales of caribou hides arrived in Resolute Bay in March 1954.

It is difficult to believe that, if government personnel at a Canadian government post established in the High Arctic were missing essential items such as Arctic clothing and bedding, these essential supplies would not have been sent in immediately. A Canadian government post would not be established in the High Arctic (or anywhere else) without an appropriate budget to establish and maintain the operation. The Department had established no budget to create and maintain the new communities. It used existing relief and transportation accounts to finance the movement of the relocatees. The RCMP would be responsible for the police posts. Trade stores were vital, and these were established with funds from the Eskimo Loan Fund. Formally, the trade stores were Inuit commercial operations. In reality, they were government-established and -run stores. The Department's financial ability to support the stores and respond to contingencies was constrained by the amounts and terms of the loans, and the amount available through the Loan Fund was not adequate for the project. The formal authorizations and funding for the project should have matched the substantive reality of the project, giving the Department the flexibility to respond to contingencies that were, given the nature of Arctic operations, entirely predictable. Instead, these contingencies were absorbed in the form of increased hardship for the relocatees as the Department scrambled to solve problems, for example, with RCAF help.

The relocatees arrived in the High Arctic without any large boats, which had been left behind in Inukjuak. The relocatees believed that there would be boats in the new land. The RCMP at Craig Harbour had provided a small trap boat after the relocatees said that they had been promised a boat; the local RCMP had not been advised of this, however, and no special arrangements for a boat had been made. The police also used their own boat to take the Inuit on several walrus hunts. At Resolute Bay, the RCMP detachment did not have a boat. Constable Gibson was able to get help from the RCAF base in the form of a boat and operator to take some of the Inuit out hunting. RCMP members in both locations took the relocatees out on various hunts during the first year. On one hand this showed the concern of the RCMP members for the well-being of the relocatees. On the other, it tended to underline the restricted freedom of the relocatees to hunt in the new areas, since one of the concerns of RCMP members was conservation. This form of leadership was also offensive to the independence of the Inuit. What would be seen by RCMP members as encouragement to hunt was, for the Inuit, unwelcome bossiness and scolding. It is a peculiar concept of self-reliance that involves the continual intrusion of a local official into the daily lives of individuals by way of exhortation and scolding to carry out the basic activities of living.

Self-reliance implies independence and freedom of action, with the responsibility that comes with independence. The means the government chose to achieve its purported objective involved treating the relocatees like children and injecting elements of coercion into many aspects of daily life. The contradiction is evident in the view that seemed to prevail prior to the relocation that the Inuit “must be *made* to stand on their own two feet”.²¹⁰ This attitude also reflects a complete disregard for any aspirations the Inuit might have had to improve their condition by taking advantage of the opportunities offered by contact with non-Inuit society. Henry Larsen had believed that Inuit gravitated to settlements, not out of any weakness of character, but because of a desire to improve their lives. As has been discussed, the inherently coercive aspect of the relocation put the relocatees in a situation where those aspirations would be denied. Their choices would be limited primarily to a choice between hunting or not hunting, and the latter was not a real option.

The Inuit Sense of Betrayal and Abandonment

The belief of the relocatees that they were betrayed and abandoned by their government was the direct consequence of not disclosing the true character of the relocation to the Inuit. The relocatees had no idea that the relocation could fundamentally alter their way of life. They thought instead that they were going to a place where they would have a better life. The objective of requiring greater reliance on hunting and less reliance on the trade store was inherently coercive. The small coercions that were evident in the day-to-day life of the new communities are directly attributable to the nature of the objective. Those who have chosen freely to live primarily by hunting and who are seen to have made that choice do not need to be coerced into living that life. In fact, the Pond Inlet Inuit, who were seen by the local police as the independent hunters experienced in the High Arctic, were not bossed around and scolded like the Inukjuak Inuit, who were seen as welfare cases who were there to be rehabilitated. In so acting, the police were carrying out the directions issued by the Department.

It should be made clear that the situation and its consequences were not the making of the individual RCMP members stationed at the High Arctic posts. They were carrying out directions that originated with the Department in connection with a scheme that also originated in the Department. The RCMP members’ individual beliefs and attitudes reflected commonly held views and attitudes throughout the public service at all levels.

Sincere concern about the welfare of the Inuit is reflected in many of the actions of individual RCMP members. At Grise Fiord Corporal Sergeant and Constable Pilot proposed to build houses for the Inuit if the Department would, at relatively

²¹⁰ Diubaldo, pp. 78-79, quoting from an October 11, 1949 memorandum from the post manager at Sugluk to the manager of the Ungava Section of the Hudson’s Bay Company.

low cost, provide the materials. At Resolute Bay Constable Gibson scavenged scrap lumber as well as surplus supplies from the base to construct small houses for the Inuit and to run electricity and a telephone line from the base to the settlement. The individual members of the RCMP worked under difficult conditions themselves.

Similarly, those involved in the conception and planning of the relocation evidenced no general lack of humane intent, although the evidence demonstrates an arbitrary frame of mind and a casualness about effective planning and execution that would not likely have prevailed had these arrangements been made on behalf of non-Inuit. Relocations had broad support in principle both within and outside government, including the churches and the Hudson's Bay Company. The failings were not individual failings; they were, primarily, institutional and, more broadly, societal failings. To recognize this does not, however, excuse the wrongs done to the Inuit. Well-meant but mistaken actions are still wrong, both in concept and in the result. The hardship, suffering and injustice that resulted are discussed throughout this report.

It must be emphasized that this was not a case of an appropriate plan running into difficulty because of failures in carrying it out. The plan was inherently unsound, and the steps taken to carry out the plan were equally unsound. Failures in execution only aggravated the hardship and suffering inherent in the plan from the outset.

Life at Craig Harbour/Grise Fiord

For more than two years, the Inuit settlement on the Lindstrom Peninsula was at a distance of some 40 miles from the police post at Craig Harbour. The site had been selected not only in the belief that sea mammals were plentiful at Grise Fiord, but also to discourage what was believed to be the tendency of the relocatees from northern Quebec to seek 'handouts'. The relocatees themselves understood that the site had been selected so that they would not become a burden on the police post. The difficulty of the terrain and the high winds, which made ice conditions unpredictable at times, had the effect of increasing the distance beyond the nominal 40 miles.

In 1956, the police post moved to the east side of Grise Fiord, across from the Lindstrom Peninsula, and it would be only in 1962 that all the Inuit would come to live in one settlement with a school, co-op store, and police post. The decision to establish the co-op stores would be made in 1960, with the police operating the trade stores until that time within the constraints imposed by the Loan Fund.

The small size of the communities would lead very quickly to problems finding spouses for the young people; these problems would continue for years. Hunting and trapping remained the basis for the local economy until the early 1970s. By contrast, employment began to become a significant part of the

Resolute Bay economy very shortly after the relocation, and by 1968 hunting had ceased to be a primary activity.

In the late 1950s a number of people from Grise Fiord expressed a desire to move to Resolute Bay, but they were discouraged from doing so by the police, who feared that this would start a trend that would result in the entire community leaving. This concern is telling, showing that life at Grise Fiord was relatively harder than life at Resolute Bay and that the police believed that they had a duty to keep the Grise Fiord settlement going. The persuasive efforts of the police in this regard were successful for a number of years, and it would not be until the mid-1960s that families from Grise Fiord migrated to Resolute Bay. In the case of one person who moved from Grise Fiord to Resolute Bay in 1967, it appears that the individual had been seeking permission to move for several years and had not received a reply. It was only when he was told by "non-RCMP Euro-Canadians" that the "decision and responsibility to leave were entirely his own" that he left for Resolute Bay in 1967. The explanation for this behaviour appears to lie in the power relationship that existed between government officials, particularly the police, and Inuit. The relocatees have spoken about this. In 1958, for example, a young man at Grise Fiord, who had been discouraged by the police from marrying in 1955, was seeking a wife in Resolute Bay. The woman's family were not enthusiastic, however, because it would mean that the young woman would move to Grise Fiord, where the economic and community situation was not as good.

When the men from Grise Fiord were out hunting and trapping, their wives and children were left at the camp. Because supplies available from the trade store were limited, the families often experienced hunger and cold. This is reflected in the police report for 1954 which indicated that it had been suggested that some of the hunters always remain at the camp so that the hunters who were away would not have to worry about their families running out of fresh meat and seal oil before their return. In this regard, it will be recalled that the rules for the trading post did not permit trappers to receive credit to keep them going until they had something to trade. It would also emerge in 1958 that supplies at the trade store were inadequate. Shortages of food and fuel at the Grise Fiord store had been a problem since the very beginning and were a source of hardship for the Inuit.

This does not emerge from the police reports but from the 1958 Eastern Arctic Patrol report. When the officer in charge of the patrol discussed these complaints with the local police, they confirmed that all the Inuit had talked about leaving Grise Fiord because of food shortages and that the police had tried to explain that this was the result of how the Loan Fund worked. In other words, the loan arrangement did not provide sufficient funds to buy enough stock for the store to meet the relocatees' requirements. This was simply a fact of life for the RCMP in the new communities and not something they could do anything

about because it was under the Department's control. This may explain why the issue does not surface in earlier RCMP reports and is mentioned only in passing in the 1958 RCMP report. Where the RCMP were in control of supplies, they were attentive to what was required. This is reflected in the 1958 inspection of Eastern Arctic detachments by the officer commanding "G" Division. He refers to the food requirements of the Inuit special constables and their families and concludes that a larger supply would be required at the police post at Alexandra Fiord together with an emergency supply in case the ship could not get in. The discussion indicates that the only trading store in the area was the small store at Grise Fiord but that "This store does not carry sufficient for the little group of natives taken there in 1953."

The relocatees at Grise Fiord endured hardship for years as a result of inadequate supplies at the trade store. This was the result of the Department providing insufficient funds to maintain an adequate stock of goods. This neglect appears to have reflected the desire to increase Inuit reliance on hunting and reduce reliance on the trade store.

The discussion of supply problems in the 1958 RCMP reports also shows that Inuit unhappiness was generally not taken very seriously. This raises a question about what lay behind comments in earlier police reports that speak in terms of the relocatees having indicated no "definite" desire to return.

By 1958, the trading store at Grise Fiord had built up a substantial credit on account of family allowances, but goods could not be issued against family allowance credits because of the way the Loan Fund operated. The Loan Fund did not provide for sufficient supplies to meet the demand. If goods had been issued "it would mean that the amount of essential supplies which the store could order would be reduced and other Eskimos in the community would suffer."

Conditions would improve gradually at Grise Fiord with the provision of housing, a school, and a co-op store. The relocatees did adapt to the different hunting conditions. A study of Grise Fiord by Milton Freeman, an anthropologist, would conclude that, viewed in the government's terms, the hunting returns were favourable and ensured that basic needs – meat for human and dog food and skins for clothing and other essential uses – were met. Freeman also observed, however, that this had been achieved at a cost, particularly for the Inukjuak Inuit, who had had a longer period of dependency on store foods and had come from a very different part of the Arctic with much a greater variety of game food and fish.²¹¹

²¹¹ Milton M. R. Freeman, "The Grise Fiord Project", in *Handbook of North American Indians*, ed. D. Damas, vol. 1.5 (1984), pp. 681-682.

Life at Resolute Bay

At Resolute Bay, employment began to contribute to income fairly shortly after the relocation. There was some summer work in 1954, and the amount of work available would increase over the years. Jenness reports that employment income at Resolute Bay in 1961 amounted to \$33,574.40.²¹² By 1966, hunting had ceased to provide primary support for the community, and most families were dependent on income from employment.

Studies by D. Bissett and J.R. Bockstoce found Resolute to be a successful community with a stable economic base, although alcohol was a source of difficulty in the community at times. Bockstoce, a Yale University anthropologist, considered that Resolute Bay, with sufficient game and employment opportunities, had not suffered the problems of other communities where people had been attracted initially by the prospects of employment but were left without adequate financial resources and access to game. The problems caused by alcohol, available because of proximity to the base and employment at the base, is illustrated in the unhappy circumstances of Joseph Idlout's death. He moved to Resolute Bay with his family in 1955 to continue a hunting life; shortly thereafter he obtained full-time employment at the base and died in 1968 in an alcohol-related accident.

Hunting and trapping were for many years the significant economic activity at Resolute Bay, and the police-run trade store was not replaced with a co-op until 1960. There were continuing complaints at Resolute Bay about the accounts at the store. People did not know where their accounts stood. The stock of supplies was basic, as it was at Grise Fiord, and in 1956, no supplies were delivered because they were not ordered in time for shipment. The annual supplies totalled some 18 tons. The RCAF was prepared to assist, provided agreement could be reached on cost recovery. However, the Department did not have any money to cover such a cost. Eventually, in January 1957, it was agreed that the RCAF would airlift one ton of the most basic supplies, such as ammunition, so that the Inuit could continue hunting, at a cost of \$194. These bare minimum supplies were presumably delivered after January 1957, more than six months after they should have arrived. The other 17 tons of supplies were never delivered and would have included many of the staples, such as flour and tea, upon which the Inuit depended. The decision to send in only a bare minimum of supplies so late in the season raises a question about whether the need of the Inuit for store goods was appreciated and demonstrates how cost considerations and inadequate government funding for the project led to the Inuit suffering hardship as a result of the lack of needed supplies.

The evidence is clear that Inuit at Resolute Bay did go to the dump for more than just scrap lumber. Unused or unneeded foodstuffs from the base would

²¹² Jenness, p. 114; \$24,000 of this represented the earnings of five men who had full-time employment, with the balance representing the earnings of seven other families.

often end up in the dump and would be taken by the Inuit when the opportunity arose. With the limited supplies available through the trading store and the unreliability of these supplies, as evidenced by the 1956 supply failure, some people supplemented their diet with food from the dump.

The following year, 1957, saw a measles epidemic at Resolute Bay. Measles had broken out among Inuit aboard the annual supply ship, and the 52 Inuit passengers disembarked at Resolute Bay. The infected Inuit were accommodated in huts at the Department of Transport facilities. The other Inuit passengers who were not ill were accommodated at the Inuit settlement at Resolute Bay. Not surprisingly, measles spread to the Inuit settlement. The unexpected arrival of 52 Inuit raised questions about how their supply needs would be met. The trade store did not have sufficient supplies, and the RCAF and the Department of Transport had not been authorized to support this emergency camp. Officials considered various options for dealing with the situation once the measles outbreak was over: leaving the people to winter at Resolute Bay until ship-time the following year; leaving them until the spring when they could be flown to their destinations; removing them by airplane to Churchill to winter there; or transporting them to their destinations, as soon as conditions permitted, using a charter aircraft. The last option was considered the most humane and the least expensive in the long run, but it appears that the Inuit spent a year at Resolute Bay before they were moved to their destinations by ship the following year.

The Different Perspectives on the Promise to Return, the ‘Success’ of the Project, and the Desire to Return Home

The promise to return was a significant promise to the relocatees. For the Inukjuak Inuit, it meant that the relocation was not permanent. They went believing that they would be returning home. Believing the move to be temporary made leaving home easier. At the very least, the promise meant that the Inuit did not have to make a decision about whether to make the relocation permanent. They could decide later. However, the administration hoped that the relocation would be permanent; returning the Inukjuak Inuit to their homes would have meant the failure of the project. The link between returning the relocatees to their homes and the failure of the project is evident in various comments made by officials. Cantley, in 1953, said that “if they did not like the country they would be returned to their homes again.... If the first group is successful and satisfied, others will follow. If not, then we shall have to bring them back.” This statement also suggests that what would be involved would be returning the group to Inukjuak. The statement is interesting as well because it indicates that others following the first group to the new locations would be seen as a sign of the success of the project. Consideration seems not to have been given to other possible explanations for why relatives might follow the relocatees to the High Arctic, such as a concern for the well-being of the relocatees.

and the desire for families to be reunited. These were factors identified by Inukjuak Inuit who came to the new communities in 1955.

The Deputy Minister, writing to the Commissioner of the RCMP with regard to the possibility of further relocations, spoke of the possibility of the relocatees returning home in the following terms:

We do not know what proportion of the Craig Harbour Eskimos and those at Resolute Bay may wish to return to their former homes after a stay of say three or four years in the High Arctic. We have been hoping that the majority of them would regard their new locations as permanent. If, on the other hand, they are not content to stay and demand to be sent back, this would be a disappointment to us and a factor to be considered in connection with establishing other groups.²¹³

This statement indicates that the “demand to be sent back” would be seen as a blow to the success of the project, yet the testimony of the relocatees indicates that many people expected, not to have to demand a return, but rather to be told when they could go home, which is more consistent with how things happened at that time between non-Inuit and Inuit. Inuit were seldom in a position to demand anything. Perhaps, however, this makes too much of the use of the word ‘demand’ in the Deputy Minister’s memorandum. Choice of words aside, it is a fact that it was an extraordinary occasion when an Inuit did not succumb to the persuasion of a local official, particularly the local police officer. The records of the day are replete with examples of encouragement and persuasion that were successful. Inuit relations with local officials such as police officers cannot be judged by the cultural norms that apply between other Canadians and their local officials. Non-Inuit could use persuasion to achieve their objectives. This could be understood by an Inuk to be directive in nature. The non-Inuit would consider that no order had been given but rather that advice had been freely accepted because it was good advice. Hence one party to the discussion would feel that permission to do something had been refused, while the other would feel that the desire had been abandoned as a result of lack of determination or interest. This was the conundrum of non-Inuit/Inuit relations.

Another 1956 memorandum refers to the promise to return in terms more like those communicated by Stevenson on his visit to Inukjuak in June 1953. This memorandum from Sivertz, Chief of the Arctic Division, is as follows:

It should be remembered that we are feeling our way into these projects. So far things have gone well...better than we could properly have hoped. After two years the people seem content to stay on, whereas they only agreed to go in the first place on condition that we

²¹³ Robertson to Nicholson, May 8, 1956, as quoted in Gunther, p. 145. Whether this statement is based on an understanding that a promise to return had been given or is based only on the common sense implication that the people should be returned if they were not happy is not material. The statement is consistent with the promise that was undeniably given.

promise to return them to their former homes after “two or three years”.

Here again, the government was looking for signs that the Inuit were satisfied in their new locations. There is much documentation to indicate that officials believed that the Inuit were satisfied and so were content to stay. This raises questions about what the indicators of Inuit satisfaction were and what account was taken of those indications of Inuit unhappiness.

There was much about the relocation scheme that could and did cause hardship, suffering and unhappiness. Yet as a general rule, these matters were not discussed in the government memoranda of the day. It is in the 1958 Eastern Arctic Patrol report, for example, that the first detailed discussion of Inuit unhappiness about the supply situation at Grise Fiord occurs. These complaints had been made known to the local police and had been referred to in passing in the annual police report but were not taken seriously.

Failure to take these complaints seriously can be attributed to the structure of the relocation project and the institutional attitudes that supported the project. The long-standing belief that the Inuit lacked the understanding to make wise decisions resulted in a project designed to take people from what was perceived as a welfare existence to a place where they could make a living from the land. Once they were seen to be making a living from the land, despite some difficulties, they were thought to be better off there than going back to live on welfare. So long as the Inuit were thought to be achieving the goal of the project – making a living from the land – it was inevitable that Inuit complaints would not be treated seriously. This was another aspect of the coercive character of the relocation. This also leads directly back to the question of the indicators of success.

The project was designed to see whether the relocatees could make a living off the land in the High Arctic. This involved two elements: first, there would have to be sufficient game to support the people; second, the people would have to adapt to new conditions to take advantage of the available game. Game was available in the High Arctic once people learned how to hunt for it, although the hunters’ expectations that there would be plenty of large land mammals were not met. In time, the people did adapt and were able to live by hunting. From the government’s perspective, the needs of the people were being met and, in these terms, the project was a success.

The situation for the Inuit was substantially more complex, however. They were in the High Arctic because it was what the government wanted. The government was not offering a return home, and although the Inuit indicated their desires and wishes, it was typically not their nature to do so in a confrontational or demanding way. They had family members with them in the High Arctic to whom they were attached, and it was possible to make a living, albeit a hard living, in the High Arctic. They also had attachments to the homeland and the people there. This complexity may offer a partial explanation for the reports of

former officials that they received indications that people were doing well and were satisfied to stay. The prospects for real communication on this issue might have been better had means been in place for people to move back and forth more easily between the High Arctic and Inukjuak. Yet the relocation plan did not provide for such links.

The Inukjuak relocatees were not free to return because they did not have readily available means to return home. They could not vote with their feet.²¹⁴ They could not just get up and go home. A return required discussion with an official about the reasons for wanting to return home, with a decision to be made involving great finality.

Apart from the basic cultural problems of communication between non-Inuit and Inuit, the possibilities for meaningful communication were also complicated, in the case of the Inukjuak Inuit, by the attitude of officials that they were welfare cases. The day-to-day strain of this negative attitude, and the routine bossiness of officials that it tended to generate, did not create relationships that made communication easy.

This was further complicated by the fact that, in some cases, the Pond Inlet Inuit were treated differently by the local officials because they were seen as being self-reliant hunters. The Pond Inlet Inuit were also familiar with High Arctic conditions and adjusted more readily to life in the new locations. It would have been surprising if a hunter from Inukjuak had communicated a desire to go home based on a general categorical statement about not being able to make a go of it in the High Arctic. Apart from the potential loss of face, such a statement would confront the belief of officials, based on the game resources they could see and the success of the Pond Inlet hunters, that a living could be made on the land. It is unlikely that an Inuk would confront the issue in this way. Unhappiness and the desire to return home would typically be expressed in an indirect, non-confrontational manner. Moreover, the need to return home was rooted in deep spiritual and personal attachments to homeland and reflected a reality that government decision making tended to ignore.

Miscommunication in these circumstances was almost inevitable. The inevitability of miscommunication has its roots in the origins and objects of the relocation project. There was a failure from the outset to recognize Inuit desires and aspirations and to design the project with the special care required to address cultural factors.

²¹⁴ The Pond Inlet Inuit could have returned by dog sled to Pond Inlet. However, as appears from the early RCMP reports from Craig Harbour and Grise Fiord, the Pond Inlet relocatees looked to the government to authorize and provide the return home. It should also be noted that the Pond Inlet Inuit adjusted more easily to the new areas. One Pond Inlet family was returned to Pond Inlet in 1957. This involved little in the way of transportation difficulty, since the ship returning to the south could easily stop at Pond Inlet.

The situation was further complicated by the different ways in which men, women and children experienced the relocation. When men from Grise Fiord were out hunting or men from Resolute Bay were travelling for months with geologists, the women and children were left behind and had to look after their own needs in circumstances where the trade store did not carry adequate supplies. The experience of an Inuk travelling with a geologist, being fed regularly, and looking forward to enjoying the fruits of his labours might be expected to be happier than the experience of those left behind. Where the trade store did not carry sufficient goods to permit the men to receive, in the form of goods, the fruits of their labours, the men might also be expected to become dissatisfied. The ability of the Inuit men at Resolute Bay to work for wages was under the control of the RCMP; this also had a bearing on how an Inuk who looked forward to making money might speak to non-Inuit about life in the High Arctic. Age is another factor. Young men embarking on new adventures driving dog teams for geologists might well experience the tug of home less forcefully than older people or women and children left behind. Moreover, the indications are that life at Craig Harbour/Grise Fiord was generally harder than life at Resolute Bay.

The relocatees' desire to return is captured at times in departmental correspondence. It appears, however, as a request to return home for a visit. Instead of being perceived as a communication of a deep need to be reunited with family and homeland, these requests led to an intra-departmental discussion about the terms on which the relocatees went north and whether anyone had told them that visiting home would be paid for by the Department. Such requests first emerge in departmental correspondence beginning in 1956, although the relocatees have said that they expressed their desire to return home even earlier. The 1956 RCMP report from Resolute Bay speaks of the Inuit "from time to time" expressing the desire to return to friends and relations at Inukjuak. It is said that they wish to return only for one year. Constable Gibson, the author of the report, suggests that a rotation program could be put into effect, allowing people who wished to return to go back to Inukjuak while replacing them with people who were "keen and interested settlers". Gibson would repeat this proposal later when he was posted again in Inukjuak in 1958. In his presentation to the Commission, he said that he believes that the separation from home was one of the hardest things for the Inukjuak Inuit. His proposal, had it been implemented, would have permitted people to rejoin their relatives at Inukjuak while maintaining the new communities. It would, of course, have involved some expense, and money was always a problem for the Department.

The 1956 Eastern Arctic Patrol Report discusses the same issue and notes that there was "some thought that this was in the original agreement". The officer in charge of the Patrol was not aware of the terms on which the relocatees went north, but he was of the view that families should pay part or all of the transportation costs of a visit and guarantee that they would be self-supporting while they were in Inukjuak. In other words, they would return to Inukjuak with no

assurance that, if difficulties arose, they would have the same government support they had had at Inukjuak before they were relocated; they would have to bear the full risk of a return. The report notes that it would be difficult and expensive to return people to Inukjuak and that visits would have to be for a year. It is clear that the idea of returning did not meet with an encouraging response. The report goes on to observe that, if the relocatees were prepared to pay for the visit and guarantee to be self-supporting during the visit "they would probably have a good claim to the right to exercise the privilege". This is, to say the least, an unusual way to describe what for other Canadians would be a free decision in the exercise of a fundamental right. It underlines the fact that the Inuit were not in a position to demand anything; rather, the practicalities of the matter were such that government officials would decide what they could or couldn't do and on what basis it would be done. The net result was that the desire of the relocatees to return was not met.

The fact that additional families came to the North has been said to indicate the success of the project. Additional families from Inukjuak and Pond Inlet did come to the new communities, more to Resolute Bay than to Craig Harbour/Grise Fiord. Some of the 1955 group were among those who had considered going north from Inukjuak in 1953 but who had stayed behind for family reasons. Concern for family in the High Arctic and a desire to be reunited with them would become a significant factor in the 1955 relocation. In addition, in the 1954-55 period the government was supportive of more people joining these communities. It had always been contemplated that the original group would be followed by others and that others joining the original group would be a demonstration of the success of the project. In contrast, therefore, to the difficulties facing relocatees who wanted to go home, the government was initially very accommodating when it came to more people joining the new communities.

There is little doubt that officials suggested to the relocatees that relatives from Inukjuak come to join them. Given the nature of the relationship between non-Inuit and Inuit at the time, such suggestions would easily be perceived as directive, and Inuit acceptance of the suggestion would not necessarily reflect the complete desires of the relocatees. This would be particularly so where the primary desire to return home was being frustrated. This is reflected in Inuit testimony that the government initiated suggestions that relatives should come to the High Arctic and that this was not what the relocatees wanted.

There is also some indication that some relocatees saw asking their relatives to join them as the only viable way to reunite families, given that the desire to return was being frustrated. This does not imply that the relocatees "cynically" wished their relations to join them in a "unbearable existence".²¹⁵ Life in the new communities was not impossible, but it was harder than what people expected,

²¹⁵ Gunther, pp. 300-301.

and part of the hardship involved the lack of support of family members, loneliness and isolation. The presence of additional family members would mitigate some aspects of the hardship. In that regard, the relations who had been left behind also had a desire to be reunited with family.

Enough Game Resources to Support the Relocations?

It was not long, however, before the government began to be concerned about the capacity of the area to support continued growth of the new settlements. It will be recalled that the government did not conduct extensive or systematic surveys of game resources in these areas. As it turned out, the lack of knowledge about game resources would become a factor limiting the growth of the new communities. The limits placed on growth would contribute to the sense of isolation experienced by the relocatees. So, for example, as early as 1956, the Eastern Arctic Patrol reported that the relocatees at Resolute Bay were told, when the issue of relatives and friends from Inukjuak joining them was raised, that "they were now well off for game, seal and walrus and that too many in one area could result in a less happy situation". Thus, as early as 1956, not only was the desire to return being frustrated but obstacles were being placed in the way of families and friends being reunited.

Government officials were beginning to express concern that perhaps the game in the area would not support more people. The message seems to have been clear; more people could come north only if the government was persuaded there was sufficient game. Concern about the capacity of the game population to support a larger human population would be repeated over the years in government reports. What one finds in response are indications that the relocatees sought to persuade government officials that there was enough game to support more people. In other words, assuring the government that game was plentiful became a first step in any request for families and friends to be reunited. So one finds, in the 1956 Eastern Arctic Patrol report, an indication that the concern about game resources was answered with assurances from the relocatees that the game would support an increased population.

Expressions of apparent satisfaction cannot, however, be taken at face value. It is clear that the situation that had been created was not one designed to facilitate free and open communication. Administrators were anxious that the projects should succeed. Ross Gibson has said that the Commissioner of the RCMP spoke to him about the importance of the project, saying that it was Gibson's job to make the project a success, and Gibson later reported verbally to the Commissioner on conditions at Resolute Bay.

Taking people out of the High Arctic was equated with failure of the project. Staying or leaving were never options that had equal priority in the scheme. The need of the relocatees to maintain close contact with their relatives and

homeland was never addressed in the planning process, and no provision had been made for this, with the result that this need would be frustrated. The inequality that existed at the best of times in relations between non-Inuit and Inuit were exacerbated by an increased sense of powerlessness brought about by relocations to small isolated communities where every aspect of life was under the control of government officials, the local RCMP. As a practical matter, government officials wielded enormous power, and many Inuit looked to them for approval for things that other Canadians would take for granted. Seeking the approval of government officials meant addressing their concerns. This meant, in the case of a desire for families to be reunited, giving government officials the assurances they sought that the game in the area would support more people.

There is no inherent contradiction between documents that contain expressions designed to be pleasing to government officials and other evidence indicating the desire to return home, the expectations that were not met, and the hardships that were suffered. These are all different aspects of the High Arctic relocatees' experience. Moreover, not everyone experienced the relocation in the same way.

Letters from Relocatees

A number of letters from the Resolute Bay relocatees have been provided to the Commission by Mr. Gerard Kenney with the suggestion that some show the relocatees were happy.²¹⁶ Interestingly, the Commission was not provided with letters from Craig Harbour/Grise Fiord, where conditions were undoubtedly harder given the smaller size of the community and the absence of a large base to provide support through employment, the provision of surplus supplies, and transportation links to the south. Of twenty letters provided to the Commission, nine are from Idlout, the Pond Inlet hunter who in 1951 had indicated his desire to go north. Letters from Idlout in the 1956-57 period indicate his happiness with the game he found at Resolute Bay and his life as a hunter there. The relationship between the Pond Inlet and Inukjuak Inuit, as well as the differences in hunting techniques between the High Arctic and the Inukjuak area, are reflected in a May 19, 1956 letter from Idlout:

I would like more help coming here from Pond Inlet area to help out in the teaching of the hunting as the Port Harrison hunters are not too keen and do not try too hard. They are good at hunting polar bear but have not the right idea of sealing under the ice.

A letter the following spring indicates Idlout's belief that the Inukjuak hunters were better at hunting seals through holes in the ice than they were the previous year. A letter from Idlout of December 18, 1956, the year in which supplies failed to arrive at Resolute Bay, indicates that some people are running out of ammunition although people still had enough game for food. Nonetheless,

²¹⁶ The letters are reproduced in full in Part 2 of the Supporting Summary.

Idlout still had a need to trade and suggested going to Spence Bay in the spring for that purpose. He wanted to know if the official to whom he was writing thought this was "a good idea". Later letters from Idlout deal with the issue of obtaining or maintaining a liquor permit.

Mr. Kenney and others believe that Idlout's letters refute the complaints of the Inukjuak relocatees. However, there is no reason to believe that Idlout was typical of the relocatees and good reason to believe that he was not. For one thing, he came from Pond Inlet, a High Arctic community, and for another, he led a way of life before relocating that was less reliant on an income economy than was typical of Inukjuak Inuit. It will be recalled that rehabilitation was a central component of the plan, and Idlout was never seen by the government as a candidate for rehabilitation. Idlout's letters underline the fact that the relocation was unsound as a rehabilitation scheme but might have been appropriate for Inuit from High Arctic communities who depended mainly on hunting and wished to try hunting in other areas.

Several of the letters are from people requesting that relatives join them at Resolute Bay, giving assurances that there is lots of game to support more people.²¹⁷ In this regard, the relocatees can be seen to be seeking to address the concern of government officials about the adequacy of game. If they were not successful in persuading the officials that there was enough game, their desire to be reunited with their families might be frustrated. These letters underline the extent to which the relocatees looked to government officials for decisions concerning their lives and the control that was, as a practical matter, being exercised by government officials. Writing pleasing letters to officials is part of the experience of living under these conditions. Deep-seated resentment is the legacy.

One letter of October 5, 1960 is a despairing request for consideration of a return home to Inukjuak. The letter speaks of trying to stick it out at Resolute Bay in the coming winter and concludes as follows:

I want you to write to me if I am going back to Port Harrison. I will be thankful if I can go. My wife's father lives at Port Harrison and he is very old. I want to go back for a while next summer. I still want to go hunting this winter at Resolute. I am able to live anywhere – Port Harrison or Resolute Bay. If the Eskimos' boss doesn't mind. I will be happy. Even if he refuses, I won't mind. Because I can't do anything myself. I can only do anything if the white people help me. I know that white people help me a lot – all of them.

The letter speaks clearly to the experience of dependency upon non-Inuit and the loss of freedom this involved.

²¹⁷ The first letter from an Inukjuak relocatee is dated October 10, 1959, which was years after the government first failed to honour the promise to return.

A letter dated September 26, 1961 is another request to return to Inukjuak. The writer says that he wants

so much to see my relatives. I need to know about my sister. I came to Resolute Bay in 1955, it is now 1961 that's how long its been since I've last seen my relatives back in Inukjuak. I am longing for my sister. It's been too long without seeing them. It was made clear to me that we could see them again when they moved us from Inukjuak.

The response of November 28, 1961 talks about how expensive it is to fly from Resolute to Inukjuak and that the Department cannot pay for a trip if it is only to visit his sister. It is suggested that maybe there is another reason for wanting to go to Inukjuak and, if so, he should speak to the police at Resolute Bay. The letter does not suggest what other reasons there might be for returning that would prompt the government to fund the return. By 1961, policies had been established to permit payment for visits – for example, to visit people who were sick if a doctor said this would be good for the patient. However, there was no hospital in Inukjuak.²¹⁸ The net effect of the reply was to frustrate the desire to return home.

Some of the later letters in 1962 and 1963 begin to show a change in the relationship with government officials. The letters are more assertive and state specific complaints about the housing situation and about some Inuit who arrived by dog team and were in need of relief but did not receive it. Freeman has reported that the devolution of local administrative authority to Inuit committees also led to growing awareness in Grise Fiord and points to various examples of the exertion of influence, including two complaints in 1966 about the conduct of a local RCMP officer and various successful petitions to government in 1966 and succeeding years. Zebedee Nungak, in his presentation to the Commission, also spoke about the growing consciousness of the Inuit leading eventually to public statements about the relocation and their demands for redress.

Mr. Kenney interviewed a number of Pond Inlet Inuit and believes that these interviews demonstrate that there was abundant game in the High Arctic and that the Inukjuak Inuit are exaggerating the hardship they suffered. As discussed earlier, the presence of game is not the substantive issue. If there had not been game, the relocatees, particularly at Grise Fiord, would not have survived. The game issues involve expectations that were not met with respect to large land mammals, changes in diet, adjustment to a new area and new hunting techniques, and the reduced support resulting from a smaller trade store. The hardships suffered by the relocatees also involve more than issues related to game. These hardships were the result of attitudes portraying the Inuit as primitive

²¹⁸ See Gunther, pp. 277-278, where he suggests that two items of Treasury Board policy would apply to the issue of returning to Inukjuak — one involving visits to patients in hospital and the other involving transportation home because of the failure to conform to the rehabilitation project. The latter implies that the project was for rehabilitation purposes.

hunters who should be happy if they were in a place where they could hunt. To accept today such an oversimplified view of the situation would be to perpetuate the injustice. There can be little doubt that the relocatees have become more forceful in expressing their complaints as they saw their quest for justice was being frustrated time and again. This does not, however, detract from the fundamental validity of their grievances.

Conclusion

The experiences of the relocatees were the predictable result of a scheme that was coercive in its objective and in the means chosen to achieve that objective. The plan was inherently unsound, and the means chosen to implement it were equally unsound. The objective, and how it would be achieved, were not communicated to the relocatees. The failures in execution served to aggravate the hardship and suffering that were inherent in the plan from the outset. This was compounded by the failure to honour the promise to return, resulting in suffering caused by isolation from home and kin and the nature of life in small remote communities. The failure to honour the promise to return in and of itself means that the relocatees were kept in the High Arctic against their will. This applies to both the 1953 and the 1955 group, since many of the 1955 group had been approached in 1953, and the promises made were known to both groups. Both groups went to the High Arctic with the same understanding – that they would be returned home if they so wished.

Sovereignty as a Reason for the Relocation

The question of Canadian sovereignty over the High Arctic islands was a subject of comment from time to time while the relocation was being conceived, planned and implemented. The role sovereignty may have played in the relocation has been a matter of considerable debate. The relocatees believe that sovereignty must have been the principal reason for the relocation. Professor Grant has argued, on the basis of an extensive review of the documentary record, that concern about Canadian sovereignty over the High Arctic islands was one of the two reasons motivating the relocation, the other being concern about the conditions of the northern Quebec Inuit. The contrary view, taken by, among others, Professor Gunther, is that sovereignty concerns were not a factor in the relocations and, to the extent that one or two officials may have referred to sovereignty, they were not expressing a concern of Canadian government or of the department in which they worked. There was, in his view, “no *de facto* or *de jure* threat to Canadian sovereignty on Ellesmere Island.”²¹⁹ Gunther concluded that “the evidence in support of the sovereignty claim is flimsy and flawed. The evidence against this claim is overwhelming.”²²⁰

A separate and extensive discussion of sovereignty is required in light of this long-standing controversy so that sovereignty’s role in the relocation can be seen in perspective.

²¹⁹ Gunther, p. 376.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

There are two distinct questions. First, was sovereignty a factor in the conception or planning of the relocation? Second, if so, then to what extent was sovereignty a factor? As we have seen, the relocation had its roots in the instability of the fur trading economy. To say, however, that economic considerations were significant does not in itself exclude the possibility of other considerations such as sovereignty. Nor can sovereignty be dismissed as a possible consideration merely by pointing to a wide array of activities that are sufficient to assert sovereignty and concluding that the relocation was not necessary for this purpose. The same could be said of any activity looked at in isolation. Governments frequently do more than what is minimally sufficient to achieve an objective.

Historical Background

Many islands in the Canadian Arctic were not permanently inhabited, including those north of Lancaster Sound where the relocations took place. Greenland Inuit hunted frequently on Ellesmere Island and had done so for many years. Inuit from northern Baffin Island did not hunt on Ellesmere Island as much as in other areas, however, as the area cannot be reached easily by dog team. The ice conditions across Lancaster Sound are not conducive to travel, and the route to the Island is not a direct one. The Greenland Inuit, however, could reach the Island quite easily and travelled extensively over it, supporting themselves and their dogs from its game resources. The Greenland Inuit's knowledge of the area made them desirable employees when RCMP posts were first established north of Lancaster Sound at Dundas Harbour, Craig Harbour and the Bache Peninsula. Greenland Inuit were also hired by various parties exploring the area.

Dr. Gordon W. Smith, who appeared before the Commission as part of a general discussion on the subject of sovereignty with Professor Donat Pharand and Marc Denhez, provided a brief review of the history of Canada's claim to the Arctic Archipelago.²²¹ In 1880 the British government transferred to Canada Britain's claim to sovereignty over the Arctic Archipelago. The difficulty with this transfer was that it could not be said with any assurance what the exact extent of these islands was, what their boundaries might be, or how complete Britain's title to them was. For a time Canada did little to assert sovereignty over the Arctic Islands. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the islands were organized into the District of Franklin, and in the ensuing years several expeditions were sent to the Arctic that were, to a large extent, sovereignty voyages. Landings were made on various islands, and proclamations of sovereignty were made. Visits were made to the whaling stations operating in the Arctic with a

²²¹ Gordon W. Smith, Monday, June 28, 1993, Tr., vol. 1, pp. 294ff. Dr. Smith wrote a two-part article on the subject in the spring and summer 1980 issues of *North/Nord* magazine, published by the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs and subsequently reprinted by the Department in 1980 under the title *Canada's Arctic Archipelago: One Hundred Years of Canadian Jurisdiction*.

view to exercising licensing jurisdiction over this activity. Instructions were issued with respect to the collection of customs duties.

Expeditions were also being mounted by nationals of other countries. The Norwegian explorer, Sverdrup, made an expedition to the High Arctic between 1898 and 1902 that resulted in the discovery of islands to the west of Ellesmere that Sverdrup claimed for Norway. Between 1903 and 1906, Amundsen sailed through the Northwest Passage for the first time. The American, Peary, was also exploring Arctic and, in 1909, claimed the North Pole and all the surrounding area for the United States. His expedition had set up a camp on the northern tip of Ellesmere Island from which the push to the Pole had been made. Another American, Cook, had also been travelling in the area of Ellesmere Island.

Following the First World War, there was considerable activity by Canada in the Arctic Archipelago. The Northwest Territories Council was organized in 1921 and charged with administering the northern territories. The Eastern Arctic Patrol was introduced and became an annual event in 1922. Similar to the earlier voyages, its purpose was to assert Canadian sovereignty by visiting various points in the Archipelago. The patrol carried out various administrative tasks, issued licences, collected custom duties, etc. Various laws and ordinances regulating activities in the northern territories were passed dealing with such matters as the licensing of scientific and exploration activity and the protection of archaeological sites. Police posts were established at various locations, and an Arctic Islands Game Preserve was established. The latter was defined along the lines of the Sector Principle, which Canada then applied to its claim in the Arctic.²²²

In 1930, any question of Sverdrup's claim on behalf of Norway was settled when Norway recognized Canada's claim to sovereignty over the Arctic Archipelago, though not on the basis of the Sector Principle. Resolution of the matter involved the payment of personal compensation by the government of Canada to Sverdrup for costs incurred on his voyage. In 1933, a dispute between Norway and Denmark over eastern Greenland was settled by the Permanent Court of International Justice, which confirmed Danish sovereignty over Greenland. The principles applied in that case would also have had application to the Arctic Islands had Canada's claim to sovereignty ever been seriously challenged.

²²² The sector claimed by Canada was an area all the way to the North Pole bounded by 60° and 141° west longitudes. Canada has more recently defined its territorial limits by reference to base lines drawn around the Arctic Archipelago. See the Territorial Sea Geographical Coordinates (No. 7) Order, SOR/DORS/85-872 made under the *Territorial Sea and Fishing Zones Act*, R.S.C. 1985, c. T-8.

The Concern with *de Facto* Sovereignty

During the Second World War the vast defence projects under way in the North – instigated and carried out largely by Americans but with Canadian consent and co-operation – gave rise, Dr. Smith observes, to some concern that Canada was losing her grip on the northern territories. These projects took place largely in the continental area and involved only some of the southerly portions of the islands. The concern was not that the United States would make an effort to take over the Canadian north but that events might unfold in such a way that actual control of the region would pass to U.S. hands. In other words, the concern was with *de facto* sovereignty.

By 1946, the U.S. presence in the North had declined substantially, but within a few years it would increase again. The Cold War led to several large projects in the Arctic, this time involving the High Arctic islands. First came the joint Arctic weather stations, followed by the radar stations of the distant early warning line. A large number of U.S. vessels were involved in the sea supply of these operations. Over time, Canada's claim to Arctic waters became the predominant concern, and one that remains today. Thus, until about 1945, sovereignty over land was the dominant concern. This concern then receded and, after 1960, the concern was almost exclusively with Arctic waters. Concern about *de facto* sovereignty declined over a period of years, not because the United States issued a declaration, as Norway did in 1930, but as the consequence of a pattern of conduct in which the United States continually recognized Canadian sovereignty over the land areas of the Arctic.

The Nature of Sovereignty

Professor Pharand agreed with and supplemented Dr. Smith's presentation. Professor Pharand noted that sovereignty means simply the right, in regard to a portion of the globe, to exercise therein, to the exclusion of any other state the functions of a state. A claim to sovereignty may be based upon some particular act or title such as a treaty or cession. It may also be based merely upon a continued display of authority. Where the claim is based upon a continued display of authority, two elements are involved: first, the intention and will to act as a sovereign and, second, some actual exercise or display of such authority. Where a claim to sovereignty over a particular territory is also made by another power, the extent of the other power's claim must be taken into account. Very little in the way of an actual exercise of sovereign rights is required, provided that a superior claim cannot be made by another state. This is particularly so in the case of claims to sovereignty over thinly populated areas or unsettled territory. The conclusion is that, from a legal point of view, there was no doubt about Canada's sovereignty over all the Arctic Islands in 1953 or subsequently, and there has been no such doubt since 1930, when agreement was reached with

Norway. There was, however, cause for concern about *de facto* sovereignty arising from the presence of the United States in the Arctic.

The concern was that Canada would not be seen to be controlling activities in the North so that, over time, Canada's *de jure* sovereignty could be questioned. It is possible for another state to displace the state initially claiming sovereignty if the second state acts like a sovereign in the territory and, over time, becomes the genuine sovereign.

Professor Pharand provided examples of the manifestations of sovereignty, including the making of legislation or regulations; the establishment of post offices; customs inspections; the approval of official geographic names; the official taking of possession; flying the national flag; the issuing of licences; general recognition by other countries of one's maps; regular visits by officials, particularly the police; the levying of taxes; registrations of vessels, works or construction; the exercise of state jurisdiction through inquests or judicial proceedings, particularly criminal proceedings; and the barring or control of foreign visitors. Occupation by the inhabitants of a country is a factor. It is not, however, the primary consideration, particularly in remote or uninhabited territories. The primary consideration is the exercise of state control.

The Significance of Canadian Inuit Presence in the High Arctic

Although occupation by the inhabitants of a country is not the primary consideration, Professor Pharand recognized that "the presence of Canadian citizens on an island claimed by Canada would help solidify the claim to sovereignty if that claim were ever challenged."²²³

Dr. Smith stated that the significance of Canadian citizens inhabiting the High Arctic "would vary from situation to situation.... I should think, just to put it in a general way, that in the case of a country like Canada claiming sovereignty over a territory such as our Arctic archipelago that a measure of occupation would be of significance."²²⁴ There was a question in Dr. Smith's mind as to whether the government would have considered such occupation to be of significance. He thought it was possible that the government would not consider the Inuit as having "a genuine role in regard to sovereignty because they were not fully fledged citizens, and perhaps that would limit the value of their occupation from...an international legal point of view."²²⁵ Dr. Smith raised this question

²²³ Monday, June 28, 1993, Tr., vol. 1, p. 365.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 360-361.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 363. We saw in Chapter 5 indications that senior officials did not consider Inuit occupation to be of significance in this regard but considered only activities of non-Inuit Canadians to be of importance in the assertion of sovereignty.

based on the fact that when Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent presented to Parliament the bill to create the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources on December 8, 1953, he spoke in terms of taking care to exercise our sovereignty continually all the way up to the North Pole and referred to the steps that should be taken in this regard, such as sending administrators and departmental representatives to the region. The Prime Minister did not speak of the Inuit in these terms; instead, he spoke in terms of the Inuit showing great potentiality and the necessity for the government “to bring them forward so that they will be able to play a full role as Canadian citizens.”²²⁶

Dr. Smith considered that the failure to mention Inuit occupation in connection with the steps required to occupy the North and the specific reference to the Inuit not yet playing a full role as Canadian citizens might mean that the government would not have seen Inuit occupation of the High Arctic as contributing to sovereignty. Dr. Smith also thought it was possible, in light of evidence that the relocation was never brought before Cabinet, that the Prime Minister did not mention the relocation simply because he was not aware of it.

Mr. Denhez observed that the creation of the Arctic Islands Game Preserve involved the exercise of Canadian sovereignty and was designed to reinforce Canadian control over the Arctic. The stated purpose of the game preserve was to preserve the game for the benefit of Canadian Native people.²²⁷ However, there was no Aboriginal population in the High Arctic Islands at the time. The question that then arose was the significance of populating the High Arctic Islands with Aboriginal people as the logical consequence of the adoption of such a measure. Mr. Denhez asserted that the 1953-55 relocation must be seen against the background of many years of government efforts to assert a Canadian presence in the Arctic and that there were those who saw the relocation in terms of a further assertion of Canadian sovereignty.

Professor Pharand commented that “the presence of part of the Canadian population – in this particular instance, Inuit families – would contribute to the strengthening of Canada’s claim if ever that claim were challenged in the future,

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 362-363. In the House of Commons *Debates* for December 8, 1953, p. 700, the Prime Minister speaks of the Inuit as being “a very sympathetic group of people” and of the desirability of giving “close attention to what can be done to integrate the native Eskimo population into the development, and probably the administration also, of parts of these northern areas.” He went on to make the following comment that touched on full citizenship: “Having a demonstration of what [the Inuit] can do, it is probably a responsibility that the Canadian people would want to have their government discharge to provide them with opportunities for developing their talents and making themselves real citizens of the Canadian nation.”

²²⁷ The Department of External Affairs appears to have considered the creation of the Game Preserve to be a contribution to the maintenance of Canadian sovereignty. A 1929 memorandum states that “The creation of this preserve and its appearance on our maps serves to notify the world that the area between the 60th and 141st meridians right up to the Pole is under Canadian sovereignty.” (October 28, 1929, “The Question of Ownership of the Sverdrup Islands”).

particularly when you consider that Canada did have legislation and regulations which are applicable to those inhabitants.”²²⁸

Dr. Smith commented that, if it was the government’s view that the occupation of the High Arctic by Inuit “would be less valuable legally than the occupation of the fully fledged Canadian citizens” – namely, the government administrators the Prime Minister did mention – “nevertheless, the occupation of Canadian subjects, even if they were not fully fledged Canadian citizens, would not be without some weight.”²²⁹

There is therefore no doubt that the presence of Inuit settlements in the High Arctic, once established, did contribute to the maintenance of Canadian sovereignty.

Sovereignty and the Relocation Decision

Concern about the *de facto* exercise of U.S. sovereignty arising from increased U.S. activity in the Arctic led the Secretary of State for External Affairs to urge the Cabinet to reactivate the Advisory Committee on Northern Development “to consider all phases of development of the Canadian Arctic and to report on the present situation and on the means which might be employed to preserve or develop the political, administrative, scientific and defence interests of Canada in that area.”²³⁰ The Prime Minister agreed and observed to the Cabinet that “it was within the realm of the possible that in years to come U.S. developments might be just about the only form of human activity in the vast wastelands of the Canadian Arctic.”²³¹

The Advisory Committee had been established in early 1948 under the Chairmanship of the Deputy Minister of the Department because of concerns about Canada’s sovereignty in the North. The concern then was also with *de facto* sovereignty. The Advisory Committee met five times from February 1948 to December 1949. The renewed concern about *de facto* sovereignty would lead to its reactivation by the Cabinet in 1953.

The reactivated Advisory Committee, under the Chairmanship of the Deputy Minister of the Department of Resources and Development, reported to Cabinet in the spring of 1953 on work being carried out in the North by Canadian departments and agencies. Each of the departments provided a report

²²⁸ Monday, June 28, 1993, Tr., vol. 1, p. 370.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 376-377.

²³⁰ Minutes of Cabinet Meeting, January 22, 1953.

²³¹ *Ibid.* It can be noted that many of the measures that would be taken by the government to maintain Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic would not displace or replace Americans but rather would ensure an effective Canadian presence.

on its activities for inclusion in the report to Cabinet. The report of the RCMP referred to the various civil administrative and welfare activities of the police among the Inuit, including “at times assisting Eskimos to establish new camps in new and better hunting grounds”.²³² The report on the activities of the RCMP also referred to the proposal to establish a detachment at Cape Herschel later in 1953 and the hope that this would “encourage the move of Canadian Eskimos into that part of Ellesmere Island...”. The report of the Department of Resources and Development described its activities in the north in relation to, among other things, the administration of Eskimo affairs. One of those activities involved planning “transfers of Eskimos from over-populated depleted areas to areas where game is more plentiful or where employment may be found.” As a whole, the activities of the RCMP and the Department constituted an exercise of Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic.

There are some indications that some officials did not see the occupation of the North by Inuit as contributing to Canada’s sovereignty objectives. This is evident in the memorandum from the Under-Secretary to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, dated December 31, 1952, stating that one consequence of the influx of U.S. citizens to the Arctic “is that the number of U.S. citizens in the District of Franklin will probably be substantially greater than the number of *white* Canadians.”²³³ (emphasis added) In addition, the memorandum prepared by the Privy Council Office in May 1953 comparing Canadian government personnel with U.S. government personnel in the Arctic omits any reference to Inuit special constables stationed at RCMP detachments and counts only the non-Inuit regular members. However, this was not necessarily the universally held view of all officials or at all times. The Commissioner of the RCMP, at the February 16, 1953 meeting of the Advisory Committee on Northern Development, for example, raised the question of using the Inuit as part of plans to ensure that civilian activities in the North were predominantly Canadian. The terms of reference of the Administration Sub-Committee of the Advisory Committee included the study of questions related to the “employment of natives” and examining “the desirability of recommending arranged movements with a view to bettering their conditions.”²³⁴ Relocations were thus of interest to the Advisory Committee, although the High Arctic relocation would not be brought before the Advisory Committee on Northern Development except as an information item later in October 1953.

Occupation of the High Arctic had, in the past, been seen as contributing to Canadian sovereignty. Grant reports that in 1920 a committee established by the Ministry of the Interior and chaired by J.B. Harkin provided advice with respect

²³² See the February and March 1953 meetings of the Advisory Committee, where the reports of the individual departments and the report to Cabinet were considered.

²³³ Document cited in Chapter 5.

²³⁴ ACND meeting, April 13, 1953.

to the question of Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic Archipelago. The committee reviewed the doubt that existed at that time about British sovereignty over at least some of the islands and hence the doubt about Canadian title, which had been acquired from the British. The committee also reviewed the Danish response to a request that the Danish government restrain Greenland Eskimos from killing musk-ox on Ellesmere Island. The Danish reply included a letter from Knud Rasmussen, the Danish Arctic explorer, who was located in Greenland, stating that “It is well known that the territory of the Polar Eskimo falls within the region designated as ‘no man’s land’, and there is therefore no authority in the district except that which I exercise through my station.” Certain protective measures were referred to and Rasmussen stated that “in order to carry out the protective measures indicated in this statement, I shall need no assistance whatever from the Canadian government.” The committee saw this as a denial of British sovereignty over Ellesmere Island and a possible attempt to wrest sovereignty from Canada. The committee recommended as follows:

To securely establish Canada’s title, occupation and administration are necessary. Therefore, next Spring an expedition should be sent north to locate two or three permanent police posts on Ellesmere land. This probably should be followed by the transfer of some Canadian eskimos [sic] to the island. Steps should also be taken to encourage the Hudson’s Bay Co. or other traders to extend their operations northward. It is also desirable that detailed exploration should be carried out on this and adjoining islands.²³⁵

The 1920 committee therefore saw settlement of uninhabited High Arctic Islands by Inuit to be advantageous in asserting Canada’s claim to sovereignty.

In a press release from the Department of the Interior, the 1934 relocation of Cape Dorset Inuit to Dundas Harbour was described as, among other things, being in the interests of asserting Canadian sovereignty. Hence, the predecessor to the Department of Resources and Development considered that colonization of uninhabited Arctic islands by Inuit would contribute to the assertion of Canadian sovereignty.

Greenlanders continued to hunt on Ellesmere Island, and the government of Canada voiced concern about this at various times. The 1950 Eastern Arctic Patrol report, with Stevenson as officer in charge, suggested that Inuit be moved from northern Baffin Island to Devon Island and that, in addition to re-opening the RCMP post at Craig Harbour, Inuit settlements could be established on Ellesmere Island “spreading out along the east coast as far north as Bache Peninsula.” “There is no doubt,” Stevenson wrote, “that country produce is plentiful in the aforementioned regions and the Baffin Island Eskimos could easily

²³⁵ Report of Technical Advisory Committee, 1920, Chaired by J.B. Harkin, RG15, vol. 1, file “Arctic Islands Reports”; document provided by Grant.

live off the country. In this regard I understand that there is evidence that the Greenland Eskimos are hunting on Ellesmere Island and vicinity. Why not give our natives a chance to cover this country and also if it is considered necessary help improve the position regarding sovereignty rights.”²³⁶ Northern Baffin Island was not an area considered to be “over-populated in relation to available resources”, so that occupation of Ellesmere Island and, hence, sovereignty appear to have been Stevenson’s main concerns. In that regard, it is of interest that the Stevenson papers in the Northwest Territories Archives contain a copy of a lecture given by Diamond Jenness at the RCAF Staff College in 1944 and 1945.²³⁷

Jenness’s paper dealt with Canada’s sovereignty over the uninhabited islands of the Arctic Archipelago in the following terms:

There can be no doubt that Canada would immensely strengthen her claim to sovereignty over the uninhabited islands in her Arctic sector if she established either Eskimo settlements or (and) scientific research stations on those islands that are most readily accessible by sea or by air. I say Eskimo settlements, not settlements of white men, because no ordinary white man is content to make his home and raise his family in a land where the usual amenities of civilized life can find no place and where medical, educational, and other facilities are either non-existent or totally inadequate.²³⁸

Grant reports that Diamond Jenness reiterated his view that colonization of the High Arctic Islands by Inuit would be advantageous to the assertion of Canadian sovereignty in a report prepared for the Department of Mines and Resources and dated June 22, 1948. In that report, Jenness suggests that the Department may decide to educate and train the Inuit population, among other things, to “colonize those areas, now uninhabited, in which it may be advisable to establish permanent settlements in order to assert and vindicate Canadian sovereignty”.²³⁹

James Cantley’s “Survey of Economic Conditions Among the Eskimos in the Canadian Arctic”, prepared in 1951 for the Northwest Territories Council and discussed earlier in this report, situated the economic issues affecting the Aboriginal population of the Arctic and the natural resources on which they depended against a strategic background. He said the following:

²³⁶ 1950 Eastern Arctic Patrol Report, cited in Chapter 5.

²³⁷ Grant has reported that this paper is among the Stevenson papers in the Northwest Territories Archives. At the time, Jenness was with the RCAF.

²³⁸ As quoted by Grant from a paper cited by Frank Tester and Peter Kulchyski, “Choosing Volunteers: A De-construction of Inuit Relocation to the High Arctic, 1953”, paper presented to the 8th Inuit Studies Conference, Quebec, October 25-28, 1992; referred to in Grant, vol. 1.

²³⁹ “Future Developments in the Arctic”, RG18, acc. 85-86/048, vol. 51, file T369-3-2.

World developments during and since World War II have focused attention on the strategic importance of Canada's Arctic territories, and the rapid decline in white fox prices which took place immediately after the war and continued until 1950 brought a long-delayed realization of the flimsy structure on which the Eskimo economy has been based.

It would seem that the age is past now when any country can continue to hold such a huge territory without occupying it or attempting to develop its resources, however sparse they may be. A territory that, fifteen or twenty years ago, may have been regarded as useless has now become, if not an asset, at least a liability of another kind. Instead of a hinterland it has become a potential frontier and as such it quite evidently interests countries other than our own. Whether we want to or not, it would appear that we shall have to revise our attitude towards the Arctic and take a much greater interest in its affairs than we have done in the past.

Strategic considerations are beyond the scope of this report except insofar as they may ultimately affect the native populations and the natural resources on which they depend. The future care and development of the Eskimos however, are the direct responsibility of this Administration and the problems they will raise are more likely to increase than decrease as time goes on. Presuming, therefore, that the Administration accepts this responsibility, an endeavour will be made to outline the present position, state the problems that presently exist or are likely to arise, and suggest means by which the difficulties may be overcome and the general economy and well-being of the natives improved.²⁴⁰

It had not escaped Cantley's attention that the High Arctic Islands were unoccupied by Inuit. He pointed clearly to these islands as areas of potential economic benefit to Inuit. At the same time, he recognized the strategic importance of the area. Whether Cantley considered that the strategic concerns would be met only by increased government activity or might also contribute to a decision to colonize the islands with Inuit is open to debate. What is interesting is the recognition of the strategic background against which government decisions were being taken. This was almost two years before the reactivation of the Advisory Committee on Northern Development.

Cantley and Stevenson were contemporaries. They were senior working level officers with considerable Arctic experience in a Department with few experienced Arctic hands. Cantley played a significant role in the relocation planning and implementation, as did Stevenson, although the decision was taken by the Deputy Minister following discussions that included more senior members of

²⁴⁰ Cantley, p. 44.

the Department.²⁴¹ Stevenson's 1950 Eastern Arctic Patrol Report leaves no doubt that he saw colonization of the High Arctic by Inuit as satisfying strategic objectives. In addition, Stevenson had in mind moving people over from North Baffin Island. This area was considered relatively well off and would later be identified as an area that could support Inuit relocated from the "over-populated" southern part of Baffin Island or northern Quebec.

Gunther observes that the following year, 1951, Stevenson attended the re-opening of the RCMP post at Craig Harbour and sent a telegram to the Department that concluded with the words "sovereignty a cinch". Gunther suggests that with the re-opening of the police post, Stevenson would no longer have seen a need for colonization by Inuit.²⁴² Elsewhere, Gunther argues that comments made in memoranda written after the relocation about the contribution of the new settlements to sovereignty merely state a fact but do not say that sovereignty was the motivation.²⁴³ Gunther's argument on this point is not persuasive. It is a fact that the new settlements, once established, made a contribution to sovereignty. Gunther acknowledges this. It follows that a reasonable person could still have believed that relocation of the Inuit to the High Arctic would contribute to sovereignty even after the Craig Harbour RCMP detachment was re-established. The two are not mutually exclusive.

Stevenson's comments about sovereignty being a cinch say more about the enthusiasm of the moment and the importance attached to sovereignty than they do about Gunther's suggestion that Stevenson was changing his mind about Inuit occupation of the High Arctic. Stevenson's comments about colonization in the 1950 Eastern Arctic Patrol report were premised on the re-opening of the Craig Harbour detachment. If he had thought the opening of the police post was all that was required, it is difficult to understand why he would go on to suggest colonization as a way of improving the sovereignty situation. Moreover, many years later, in 1977, when Stevenson was asked to prepare a report on the relocations for the Department, he stated that

Although the Craig Harbour later Grise Fiord group did not have the opportunities of employment, they continued to obtain a good livelihood from the country and this community also served a distinct purpose

²⁴¹ As noted earlier, few documents are available to indicate what the more senior members of the Department were thinking in the months leading up to the relocation decision. It is not clear, for example, why possible locations on Baffin Island were dropped from consideration in favour of the High Arctic Islands. The 'silence' created by gaps in the documentary record does not as such establish that sovereignty was never mentioned at the more senior levels in the Department.

²⁴² Gunther, p. 20.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 29, 65-70, 74; written response to RCAP Questions for Discussion, August 31, 1993, p. 7.

in confirming in a tangible manner Canada's sovereignty over this vast region of the Arctic.²⁴⁴

Given that Stevenson was asked to prepare this report as an old hand with considerable institutional knowledge, the readiness with which he makes the connection between the relocation and the affirmation of sovereignty does suggest that there were those in the Department who were concerned about sovereignty and looked for ways to enhance it.

Gunther argues that the government's goal was probably to exercise sovereignty through the assertion of administrative control, not colonization.²⁴⁵ Gunther's point is that administrative control was the principal means of asserting sovereignty and was sufficient to assert sovereignty. In addition, there is much evidence that this was the focus of government action and little evidence, he argues, that colonizing the High Arctic was seen as contributing to sovereignty.

However, the fact that there may have been others in government who believed that sovereignty could be addressed completely by exercising administrative control through the establishment of police posts and such is immaterial. Government frequently does not speak with a single voice. Every decision does not go before the full Cabinet. Individual departments have assigned areas of responsibility and may act within that mandate as they consider appropriate. The actions of officials carrying out a department's mandate are the actions of the government. Here the relocation was the responsibility of the Department. What is pertinent, then, is what was in the minds of those actually involved in making the relocation decision and planning its implementation. Stevenson, who was a respected member of the Department and one of its few members with substantial Arctic experience, believed at the time that sovereignty was a factor in considering a relocation to the High Arctic Islands. Cantley, who also had long Arctic experience and who was commissioned to report on the economic conditions of the Inuit, recognized the strategic importance of any decision the administration might make. The fundamental point is that sovereignty was in the minds of officials who would play key roles in advising on, planning, and implementing the 1953 relocation.

The importance of the Department's motivations is underlined by Gordon Robertson, who has said that the government, in the sense of the Cabinet, had no motivation with respect to the relocation because it was never discussed by Cabinet. Nor was the movement of a few Inuit families to the High Arctic relevant to the concerns of the Prime Minister regarding sovereignty. The relocation decision was made and carried out by the Department acting within its own mandate. The motivation was thus that of the Department. Robertson allows for the possibility that departmental officials might have seen the relocation as

²⁴⁴ N.W.T. Archives, Stevenson Papers; document provided by Grant.

²⁴⁵ Gunther, written response to RCAP Questions for Discussion, p. 6.

contributing to the maintenance of Canadian sovereignty. However, he considers that the dominant concern by far (“95 per cent”) was a concern to improve the conditions of the northern Quebec Inuit.²⁴⁶

The issue of Greenlanders hunting on Ellesmere Island surfaced again in the report of the 1952 Eastern Arctic Patrol, Northern Leg, with Cantley as the officer in charge. The report observed that

The occupation of the island by Canadian Eskimos will remove any excuse Greenlanders may presently have for crossing over and hunting there.²⁴⁷

This appears to be a clear recognition of the practicalities of enforcing hunting restrictions in the Arctic Islands Game Preserve when there were no Canadian Inuit in a position to exploit the resource. Settlement of Ellesmere Island by Inuit would reinforce Canada’s efforts to exclude or restrict access by foreign nationals. Greenlanders hunting in the Arctic Islands Game Preserve showed all the world, as Grant has argued, that Canada could not enforce its game regulations. This goes directly to the ability to exercise sovereignty. Cantley’s 1952 report notes that diplomatic efforts to discourage Greenlanders from crossing over to hunt would not likely have any effect. Greenlanders had long hunted on Ellesmere Island and knew it better than the Canadian Inuit. Relocating Canadian Inuit to Ellesmere Island would make the theory of the Game Preserve – a preserve for Canadian Inuit – a reality. As Cantley observed, it would remove “any excuse” for the Greenlanders to hunt there.

Gunther’s comments to the effect that the Greenlanders were merely a law enforcement issue that would be dealt with by the police misses the bigger context in relation to which the law enforcement issue was a concern.²⁴⁸ Greenlanders would continue to hunt on Ellesmere Island, with Canadian permission and subject to Canadian law, but Canada would be in a position to make those laws effective. It should be noted as well that Cantley’s 1952 Eastern Arctic Patrol Report speaks initially of moving more Inuit “over to Ellesmere Island”, which appears to be a reference to moving people from northern Baffin Island. It is only later in the report that reference is made to bringing people from “over-populated northern Quebec”. Northern Baffin Island was not considered “over-populated”.

²⁴⁶ Monday, June 28, 1993, Tr., vol. 1, pp. 146-149.

²⁴⁷ 1952 Eastern Arctic Patrol report, cited in Chapter 5.

²⁴⁸ It might also be noted that the concerns that led to the re-establishment of a police post at Resolute Bay can also be characterized as being of a law-enforcement type, but that does not take away from the contribution of the post to the exercise of sovereignty, as evidenced by the recommendation of R.A.J. Phillips of the Privy Council Office that the proposal to re-establish the post be supported for sovereignty reasons. Indeed, action to enforce the law in the face of threatened or actual law breaking is the classic act of a sovereign power. Consider, for example, the movement of the police down the Mackenzie Valley and onto Herschel Island in response to the lawlessness of the whalers.

The relocation that occurred, however, involved people from “over-populated” Quebec, with a few Pond Inlet families being recruited to assist in the adaptation of the Quebec Inuit to conditions in the High Arctic.

Then there is the comment by the Deputy Minister’s representative, Bent Sivertz, at the August 10, 1953 meeting with the RCAF about the government’s objectives for the proposed Inuit settlement at Resolute. That comment was that “the Canadian Government is anxious to have Canadians occupying as much of the north as possible and it appeared in many cases the Eskimo were the only people capable of doing this.”²⁴⁹ This meeting was held to address RCAF concerns about the establishment of an Inuit settlement at Resolute Bay.

Sivertz’s comments cannot be brushed off as idiosyncratic given his responsibility to the Deputy Minister.²⁵⁰ To the extent that Sivertz referred to sovereignty to ward off RCAF criticism, his interjection at the meeting shows an awareness of both the significance to the government of the Canadianization objective and the fact that occupation of the High Arctic by Canadian Inuit could contribute to the achievement of that objective. Sivertz’s more recent comments, in his presentation to the Commission, that he was not referring to sovereignty but only to having Canadians in the Arctic in some other sense, are difficult to understand. Interpreting his words to refer to sovereignty accords with the language of the minutes of the meeting and with later comments, discussed below, attributed to Sivertz in 1960.

Stead, of the Department of Finance, was also aware that inaction in the North could undermine Canada’s claims to sovereignty. In his report of a September 1953 trip by air to Resolute, he linked the question of Eskimo policy to the sovereignty issue in the following terms:

This question is not only a problem in itself, but also has a bearing on the sovereignty issue. Our lack of suitable action on behalf of our Eskimos has already been raised on more than one occasion in the United Nations. It seems to me that our sovereignty can certainly be regarded as in jeopardy if we do not carry out the somewhat basic function of adequately training the aboriginal population so as to fit them for participation in the life of a modern state.²⁵¹

Stead goes on to discuss an idea for training the Inuit and the possibility that pursuing this object could denude “certain islands of their civilian population”,

²⁴⁹ August 10, 1953 meeting, cited in Chapter 5.

²⁵⁰ Earlier in 1953, Sivertz was explicit about his role as the representative of the Deputy Minister when meeting with U.S. air officers. See his June 22, 1953 Memorandum for the Deputy Minister. This hardly needed to be said to Canadian officers. Sivertz worked in the Deputy Minister’s office, and his responsibility could only be to the Deputy. Sivertz is not a man who takes responsibility lightly.

²⁵¹ Report on Tour of the Arctic Islands, September 8-12, 1953, cited in Chapter 5.

but he notes that this would not likely occur unless the major military bases closed down and “of course, if this happens the pressure of the sovereignty question will be relaxed.”²⁵² The U.S. military presence in the Arctic was what gave rise to the concern over *de facto* sovereignty. If the military presence disappeared, pressure on sovereignty would also disappear. Bringing the Inuit out of the Arctic for training or employment would then have no implications for sovereignty. Stead thus relates the relocation to a broader issue of the exercise of sovereignty, namely, carrying out the government’s responsibilities in relation to the Aboriginal population. However, he also refers to sovereignty in the context of the occupation of the Arctic Islands by Canadian Inuit and links the need for an Inuit population in the High Arctic to the build-up of military bases in the North. If the military bases were closed, the “pressure of the sovereignty question will be relaxed.” Stead’s comments in relation to sovereignty reflect a then-contemporary view of the value of the project to maintaining Canadian sovereignty by someone outside the Department of Resources and Development. Stead was making the trip in relation to his work on the Advisory Committee on Northern Development.²⁵³

Comments made by officials subsequent to the relocation recognize the contribution of the relocation to the assertion of Canadian sovereignty. In a January 13, 1956 memorandum to the Deputy Minister, Rowley addressed the issue of Canadian sovereignty over Ellesmere Island and listed all the activities that had taken place in relation to Ellesmere Island, including the colonization of the island by Canadian Inuit.²⁵⁴

Later, in 1958, Rowley, as Secretary to the Advisory Committee on Northern Development, would prepare a memorandum for the Advisory Committee addressing Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic Basin and the channels lying between the islands of the Arctic Archipelago. With respect to sovereignty over the land areas, the memorandum states that

Canadian title appears secure provided adequate steps are taken to maintain Canadian activities there and, in pace with increasing international interest in the Arctic, to augment these activities to provide evidence of continuing effective occupation.²⁵⁵

Given that colonization by Inuit was listed in Rowley’s 1956 memorandum as one of the things contributing to “a great increase in Canadian activity in

²⁵² *Ibid.*

²⁵³ As discussed earlier, Stead misunderstood the economic conditions at Inukjuak, and this would be reflected in later memoranda prepared by other officials. The misunderstanding becomes clear when the Department’s memoranda leading up to the relocation are compared with subsequent mistaken views. In the case of sovereignty concerns, the issue is a consistent theme in memoranda before and after the relocation.

²⁵⁴ RG22, vol. 545, file Rowley ACND 1956; document provided by Grant.

²⁵⁵ October 14, 1958, RG22, vol. 545, file ACND 1958.

Ellesmere Island", one might conclude that effective occupation in the 1958 memorandum could also include occupation of the land by Canadian Inuit.

In October 1960, when the establishment of additional High Arctic communities was under consideration, C.M. Bolger of the Department stated that the Director, Sivertz, had said that the Grise Fiord settlement "should be continued for sovereignty purposes", although it should not be duplicated at other isolated locations. The Director had asked for an assessment of the possibility of establishing new colonies. The assessment was to address the question of whether such new colonies might "fortify our claims to sovereignty of these lands".²⁵⁶ The memorandum, which was apparently prepared for Bolger by Stevenson, states in part as follows:

The Grise Fiord project also serves a distinctly useful purpose in confirming, in a tangible manner, Canada's sovereignty over this vast region of the Arctic.... the employment of Eskimos, particularly in the High Arctic, within the range of their capabilities would be a distinct advantage to DOT and render a service to weather stations, and again the matter of sovereignty would be another aspect of such employment.... One important factor to always keep in mind is that the Eskimos at Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord are an invaluable human resource in the northern economic development taking place on Cornwallis Island and the adjacent islands...as already mentioned. The occupation of these northern islands by Canada's first Arctic citizens only enhances our claims to sovereignty of these regions.²⁵⁷

Statements in government documents in more recent years have also suggested that sovereignty was a reason for the relocation. In 1983 John Munro, then Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, presented a discussion paper prepared by Environment Canada, entitled "Environment Canada and the North", at the Third General Assembly of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference. The paper stated that "to further entrench the sovereignty claim the government relocated Inuit people from northern Quebec to the Arctic islands in the mid-1950s". The December 1985 Report of the Task Force to Review Comprehensive Claims Policy, *Living Treaties: Lasting Agreements*, stated that "thirty years ago the federal government strengthened Canadian sovereignty by moving several hundred Inuit from northern Quebec to Ellesmere and Cornwallis islands in the High Arctic, where they established the communities of Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay".

²⁵⁶ October 4, 1960, Bolger to Stevenson, asking Stevenson to prepare an assessment of the possibility of establishing additional colonies in the High Arctic. N.W.T. Archives, N92-023, Stevenson Papers, Box 10; document provided by Grant.

²⁵⁷ November 15, 1960, Bolger to Director, N.W.T. Archives, Stevenson Papers; document provided by Grant.

Conclusion

Overall, there is evidence to indicate that some who played a role in the planning or decision making – namely, Stevenson, Cantley, and Sivertz – were concerned, in addition to social and economic issues, about sovereignty and saw the relocation as a way of addressing that concern. Their views cannot be treated as idiosyncratic. There was a long history to the view held in some quarters – and within living memory in the Department – that colonization of the High Arctic Islands by Inuit would contribute to the assertion of Canada's sovereignty over the islands. This is not to say, however, that sovereignty was a dominant or overriding consideration. Nor is it to say that sovereignty was necessarily of equal rank with the economic concerns that drove the relocation. It is to say, however, that sovereignty was a factor that, in the minds of some people who played key roles in the project, reinforced and supported the relocation and contributed to the attractiveness in their minds of a relocation to uninhabited islands in the High Arctic.

It is not necessary for everyone in government to have shared this view; governments do not always speak with a single voice.²⁵⁸ This was something the Department was doing within its mandate for its own reasons. Some of those who were instrumental in planning the relocation had sovereignty in their minds. Others, outside the Department, whose acquiescence or co-operation was required, were also persuaded to co-operate, at least in part – as it seems the RCAF were – on the basis that the project would contribute to the Canadianization of the North and hence support Canada's *de facto* sovereignty. Stead, of the Department of Finance, displayed a belief, at the time of the relocation, in the importance of the project to sovereignty, including the occupation of the High Arctic islands. Stevenson referred to sovereignty as a factor in the early 1950s. Writing years later, he again points to sovereignty as a consideration. His comment must be taken as reflecting his institutional knowledge. Bolger's comments in 1960 also appear to reflect institutional knowledge.

It stretches credulity to believe that there was a period in the Department before the relocation when colonizing the High Arctic was seen as important to sovereignty and a period after the relocation when such colonies were seen as important to sovereignty but that, in the period when the decision was taken, sovereignty was not in the minds of decision makers. The weight of the evidence points to sovereignty as a material consideration in the relocation decision. There is also some evidence to indicate that sovereignty was a consideration in the decision to continue the Grise Fiord settlement. It is also clear that the relocation did contribute to the maintenance of Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic.

²⁵⁸ In some cases there may be a single view flowing from policy established by Cabinet. In other cases, departments may have broad mandates and broad discretion with respect to implementing them. Here there was no policy established by Cabinet concerning relocations.

As we have seen, economic and social concerns were primary. It is doubtful, therefore, that sovereignty was the primary consideration. The High Arctic Islands provided opportunities that were, in the eyes of the planners, consistent with the economic concern. Other areas already occupied by Inuit, such as Baffin Island, had been identified as potential locations for a relocation. These locations were dropped from the plan for reasons that are not apparent. A relocation to the High Arctic would also achieve strategic benefits. The strategic sovereignty benefits of the relocation appear to have reinforced and supported the primary economic and social objectives.

Even if sovereignty is assumed not to be a factor, this relocation was an inappropriate solution to the government's economic and social concerns. Sovereignty was, however, a material consideration, and the influence of sovereignty on the relocation serves only to reinforce the Commission's conclusions about the inappropriateness of the relocation. However, the precise extent to which sovereignty influenced the relocation is difficult to determine.

Shedding New Light on the Relocation: Summary of the Commission's Conclusions

In an appearance before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs in March 1990, John Amagoalik, then President of the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (ITC), testified that they had been dealing with the relocation issue for more than 30 years. Since the late 1970s, the Makivik Corporation (Makivik) and the ITC had made repeated representations to ministers and deputy ministers of Indian Affairs and Northern Development concerning the relocation. Renewed efforts began in 1982. A brief summary of events since 1982 is set out in Appendix 5. Part 4 of the Supporting Summary contains a fuller description of efforts to resolve the relocatees' complaints.

Over time the divergence between the position of the relocatees and that of the government has become wider. The government has also backtracked from previously stated positions. Whereas it once stated that it had no knowledge of any promise to return, the government has now acknowledged that such a promise was made and that the promise was not honoured. During the 1980s the government made various statements about the role of the relocation in maintaining Canadian sovereignty that appeared to support the relocatees' contention that sovereignty was a motivating factor. The position of the government now is that sovereignty was not a consideration. Had the government promptly acknowledged the failure to honour the promise to return and then acted to redress the wrong, the complaints might well have been resolved quickly. The reversal of position on sovereignty only added fuel to the fire, and the government's refusal to adopt the unanimous recommendations of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs was incomprehensible to the relocatees.

Each study or report that has been critical of the government has been met with a more extensive study commissioned by the government. The government has subjected each element of the complaints, piece by piece, to extensive analysis. The apparent focus of government action has been to defend itself against these complaints and to put the government's actions in the best possible light. In adopting this approach, the government has been seen as an adversary that would argue a point so long as any evidence could be found to support it and would concede a point only in the face of overwhelming evidence. The government did not step back and begin with a reassessment of the social, political and cultural context in which the relocation took place and then consider the complaint broadly in that context. Had a different approach been adopted, the government might have been led to a new awareness that would have permitted it to see the validity in the relocatees' complaints and to move toward resolving them in a more positive way.

In short, the government's handling of the complaints has served to increase mistrust and deepen the sense of grievance.

The Commission's hearings and analysis have shed new light on the High Arctic relocation. Reconciliation of the evidence concerning the relocation provides a basis for reassessing the government's responsibilities concerning the relocation and is a first step in a more fundamental reconciliation between the relocatees and the government.

The Commission's conclusions, based on the preceding evidence and analysis, are, in summary, as follows:

Inuit Dependence and Vulnerability

1. The High Arctic relocation took place in a cultural context where Inuit typically felt dependent upon non-Inuit and powerless in their dealings with them. The power that non-Inuit held over Inuit was well understood by non-Inuit, and even the wishes of well-intentioned non-Inuit could be taken as orders by Inuit. The government was present in the Arctic in the form of the RCMP, who were held in particular awe by the Inuit.
2. Not all Inuit were equally dependent or vulnerable in their relations with non-Inuit. There are indications that the dependence and vulnerability of the northern Quebec Inuit tended to be much greater than that of the people of northern Baffin Island.

Inuit Relationship to Homeland and Kin

3. The Inuit have a particular attachment to homeland and kin. This attachment was known by non-Inuit at the time of the relocation.

4. The Inukjuak area has been inhabited by large numbers of Inuit for centuries and is a traditional hunting and fishing area.

Paternalistic Government Decision Making

5. Government decision making concerning the Inuit into the early 1950s typically did not take into account the wishes and aspirations of the Inuit. Instead, government decisions reflected a paternalistic view of what would be good for the Inuit and tended to minimize or disregard Inuit needs and desires.

Sovereignty as a Factor in the Relocation

6. The relocation took place at a time when the government was concerned about *de facto* Canadian sovereignty arising from the presence of the United States in the Arctic. The concern about *de facto* sovereignty involved a concern that Canada would not be seen to be controlling activities in the North so that, over time, Canada's *de jure* sovereignty could be questioned. The weight of the evidence points to sovereignty as a material consideration in the relocation decision, although the primary concerns were social and economic.

Population Growth or Game Decline Not Factors in the Relocation

7. The information available to the government in the early 1950s does not indicate that the Inukjuak area was experiencing population growth. Rather, high mortality rates tended to result in a stable population. Nor were there indications of a serious decline in food game resources. In fact, the situation had not changed in 30 to 40 years.

The Preoccupation with 'Handouts'

8. There was a concern in the Department about the long-term instability of the fur trade and the capacity of the fur trade to sustain the income levels to which Inukjuak Inuit had become accustomed. The government saw little prospect for increased earned income in the Inukjuak area, with the result that periodic reliance on relief would become a permanent feature of life and that other 'handouts', such as family allowance and old age pensions, would become a more significant part of Inuit income. The need for relief arose periodically as a result of the cyclical nature of the fur trade, with poor years following good years over a four-year cycle. It was considered that the Inukjuak Inuit were becoming dependent on 'handouts', with a consequent loss of self-reliance and moral decline.

The Objective of Increased Reliance on Hunting

9. Officials considered that greater reliance on hunting and less reliance on the trade store would restore Inuit self-reliance and arrest the perceived moral decline. At the same time, this would resolve the perceived long-term economic concern regarding the instability of the fur trade, since a return to greater reliance on hunting would substitute for the income that fur trading would, in the long term, be unable to provide. This objective was never communicated to the Inuit.

“Overpopulation in Relation to Available Resources”

10. It was perceived that decreased reliance on the trade store through increased reliance on hunting would not be possible in the Inukjuak area unless Inuit were relocated to other parts of the Quebec coast, to the islands of Hudson Bay off the Quebec coast, or to other parts of the Arctic. In this sense, and in this sense only, the Inukjuak area was considered to be “over-populated in relation to available resources”. This phrase is unfortunately ambiguous and was thought by some to refer a hunting population outstripping available game food resources. In fact, it characterizes an economic concern of the government related to a desire to require Inuit to hunt more and rely less on earned income.

The Goal of ‘Rehabilitation’

11. The goal of restoring Inuit self-reliance and independence through greater reliance on hunting involved restoring the Inuit to what was perceived by non-Inuit to be their proper state. The goal was ‘rehabilitation’, and the High Arctic relocation would be understood at the time – though not by the Inuit – as a rehabilitation project.

Failure to Disclose the Rehabilitation Goal to the Inuit

12. The Inukjuak Inuit were not told that the government considered them to be in need of rehabilitation and that the goal of the relocation would be rehabilitation.

Relocation Would Not Relieve the Cycles in Hunting and Trapping

13. At the time of the 1953 relocation, the fur cycle was reaching its peak, and no able-bodied Inuit were on relief at Inukjuak. Hunting was good and conditions were much improved over those of 1949-50, when the fur economy collapsed and a hard winter made hunting difficult. Such cycles occurred everywhere in the Arctic where Inuit lived by hunting and trapping. White

fox trapping everywhere followed a four-year cycle.²⁵⁹ Hunting, even in areas of relative abundance, could be affected by adverse weather or ice conditions or variations in migratory patterns. Relocating Inuit to other places would not relieve such variability in the conditions of life.

The Institutional Consensus Supporting Relocations

14. There was consensus among all those with an interest in Arctic affairs, including the various government departments concerned, the RCMP, the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches and the Hudson's Bay Company, that relocations would solve perceived economic and social problems. There were, however, differences of opinion about how relocations should be undertaken, with some, such as Superintendent Larsen of the RCMP, advocating the creation of small communities with wooden houses and schools, so that the adult Inuit could maintain a hunting and trapping lifestyle while children received the education that would be essential for the future.

The Relocation Plan

15. The High Arctic relocation was conceived by the Department as a way to place Inuit in areas believed to have adequate game resources and to require them to live largely by hunting, with some opportunity to trap. A small trade store would be established but would carry a limited and basic stock. The RCMP would be responsible for administering the store and, with the limited and basic stock, would be required to ration items from the store to ensure equitable distribution. It would also be the role of the RCMP to "encourage" the Inuit to hunt.

The Coercive Aspect of the Plan

16. The relocation plan was inherently coercive. It was a plan designed to take people who were accustomed to an income economy, with the goods that income could purchase, and place them in a situation where they would be made to rely more heavily on game food, with all the hardship such a life naturally involved. The government did not need to use overt force. The imperative of survival achieved the desired objective.

The Coercive Aspects of Life in the New Communities

17. Day-to-day life in the new communities would also have coercive elements. The RCMP were directed by the Department not to give credit to trappers, even though giving credit, or grubstaking, was the common practice of trading companies. The RCMP were also directed to exercise a firm hand in the

²⁵⁹ Cycles would not necessarily coincide in the same years in different parts of the Arctic; however, the typical cycle was of four years' duration.

giving of relief. Insufficient supplies in the trade stores established in the new communities would mean that the benefit of old age pensions and family allowance often would not reach the intended beneficiaries through goods issued from the store. Instead, these amounts would be recorded as a book entry in the form of forced savings. RCMP 'encouragement' of the Inuit in furtherance of the project's objectives would result in the police telling the Inuit what to do and scolding them when they did not do what the police wanted. The Inuit camps were established at a distance from non-Inuit facilities to restrict contact between Inuit and non-Inuit and to prevent the Inuit from becoming a burden on the non-Inuit post or base. All these small elements of coercion became additionally coercive when carried out by a police force.

Misplaced Notions of Success

18. The overt signs of success of such a project, namely, self-reliance, would be similar regardless of the state of mind of any of the relocatees. Whether or not the people were unhappy or had a desire to return home, they would still have to hunt. Reports by officials stating consistently that the relocatees were doing well reflect the overt state of affairs but do not address the unhappiness that many relocatees experienced and their desire to return home.

'Rehabilitation' versus Opportunities for Independent Hunters

19. Not all Inuit relied on income from trapping to the same extent. The relocation scheme might have been entirely satisfactory for people who lived largely from hunting, with income from trapping providing only a supplement, and who did not look to government support in poor fur years. There were Inuit who went to Resolute Bay from Pond Inlet who did find the relocation satisfactory. However, these Pond Inlet Inuit were not typical of all relocatees, and the relocation scheme, by its own terms, sought to relocate people who depended more heavily on an income economy, with government support as the safety net in poor years. Even the Pond Inlet Inuit at Grise Fiord, who were used to the support of a store, found conditions too hard. The recruitment of Inuit for the project was not, therefore, limited to those who had continued to live relatively distant from trading posts, with income from trading providing only a supplement to what was obtained from hunting.

Relocation A Regressive Step

20. At the time of the relocation, Inukjuak was a substantial settlement with a Hudson's Bay Company post, a police post, church missions, a school, a nursing station, a Department of Transport weather station and radio facility, and a port facility. The school and nursing station had been established relatively recently as part of a government program to remedy past decades

of neglect. The relocation created new communities that would have no schools, no nursing stations and no missions. In this respect, the decision would turn the clock back to the era of neglect when there were no such facilities.

Further Consequences of the Rehabilitation Objective

21. The highly generalized concern of administrators about Inuit relying too much on government 'handouts' was felt by the relocatees in various ways. The concern applied both to government support programs, such as family allowance and old age security, which were available to Canadians on a universal basis, and to relief, which was available only in cases of hardship. Thus, the relocation scheme was aimed not only at changing expectations about relief, but also at discouraging reliance on the universal programs. This would involve using administrative powers to restrict or withhold the actual benefit of payments universally available to Canadians. As a result, some relocatees found that the benefit of their family allowance and old age security payments stopped after they left Inukjuak. The generalized concern about reliance on 'handouts' was also applied to all Inuit. Yet, not all Inuit, even in the Quebec part of the Arctic, were equally reliant on the combination of earned and unearned income. The relocatees were not all alike. Moreover, by 1953, conditions had improved considerably since the collapse of fur prices in 1949-50, and no able-bodied Inukjuak Inuit were receiving relief. The government's generalized preoccupation about Inuit reliance on 'handouts' and the understanding of local officials that this was a 'rehabilitation' project served only to reinforce stereotypical attitudes that would adversely complicate relations between the relocatees and the local officials responsible for their well-being.

The Deputy Minister Approved Little More than a Concept

22. The government plan included no indication of representations or promises that were to be made to the Inuit. The plan, as approved by the Deputy Minister, was very general in its description of what was to be done and for what purpose. The detail would be worked out as the plan was implemented. This meant that a large amount of discretion was left to those implementing the decision. The Deputy Minister approved little more than a concept.

The Promise to Return

23. The decision to extend a promise to return was made initially by Henry Larsen of the RCMP. It appears that the Department accepted this decision and, in fact, a departmental representative, Alex Stevenson, also extended a promise to return in his discussions with some Inukjuak Inuit. These promises were recorded in official memoranda and reports at the time.

These documents are still in existence. No plan was developed by the Department to give effect to the promise, and the means to return were not made available to the Inuit. The content of the promise to return was never clearly defined, for example, whether it covered individuals or only an entire group, and whether it covered visits back and forth. If the promise was meant to apply only to the whole group, this was not conveyed to the Inuit.

No Special Instructions about Obtaining Consent of Inuit

24. The RCMP detachments in northern Quebec and Pond Inlet were responsible for recruiting Inuit for the relocation. The relocatees were to be volunteers, but the Department gave the RCMP no special instructions about how to approach the Inuit or how to secure their consent, notwithstanding the well-known difficulty of obtaining genuine consent from Inuit. The RCMP member at Inukjuak responsible for carrying out these instructions understood that it was his responsibility to sell the Inuit on a project that was for their benefit, and that is what he did.

The Absence of Free and Informed Consent

25. It cannot be said that the Inukjuak Inuit gave free and informed consent to the relocation. The Inukjuak Inuit understood that they were going to a better place where there was an abundance of large land mammals, that they would be looked after, and that they would have the support of the Canadian government. Apart, in some cases, from an understanding that there would be a dark period, the Inukjuak relocatees had no understanding of the disadvantages or risks of the project and did not believe that the relocation could change their lives fundamentally and adversely. Nor did they understand the rehabilitative character of the plan. What the Inukjuak Inuit were offered was less than what they had, in the sense that there would be less government income support available in the High Arctic and greater reliance on hunting. As a result, the relocatees, in addition to the many hardships suffered, experienced a sense of abandonment by the government and suffered considerable distress when their expectations of a significantly better life in the High Arctic were not met.

The Inukjuak Inuit Were Not Told of the Involvement of the Pond Inlet Inuit, and the Two Groups Did Not Get Along Well

26. The Inukjuak Inuit were not told that they would be joined by Pond Inlet Inuit. There are significant differences between the Inukjuak and Pond Inlet dialects, as well as differences in the two peoples' way of living. The Inukjuak and Pond Inlet groups did not get along well in the new communities. The government's desire was to have Pond Inlet Inuit involved in the relocation to help the Inukjuak Inuit adjust to High Arctic conditions. This

idea failed, however, to take into account the disruptive effects of putting the different groups together in an isolated community.

Failure to Compensate Pond Inlet Inuit

27. The Pond Inlet Inuit found themselves providing a service to the government, giving guidance to the Inukjuak Inuit; they expected to be paid for this service but were not. The government failed to ensure that the conditions under which the Pond Inlet Inuit were participating were made clear to them. The government should accept responsibility for this misunderstanding.

The Last-Minute Decision to Send Inukjuak Families to Resolute Bay

28. The original plan called for Inuit from Fort Chimo to go to Resolute Bay where they could find full- or part-time employment. This aspect of the plan fell apart because the government never had any intention of providing housing for the Inuit at Resolute Bay, and the Fort Chimo Inuit were used to living in houses. The initial planning by the Department failed to accommodate the characteristics of the people. As a result, the employment aspect of the relocation to Resolute Bay was downplayed, and it was decided that Inuit from Inukjuak would go to Resolute Bay instead to make their living by hunting and trapping.

Forced Separation of the Inukjuak Inuit

29. The Inukjuak Inuit understood that they would all be going to the same place; they had been told they were going to Ellesmere Island. The Inukjuak Inuit would not learn that they were to be separated until they were already in the High Arctic, when they were separated and sent to different locations. This was painful and distressing for them and, in the circumstances, was clearly a forced separation.

Inadequate Regard for the Needs of the Relocatees

30. The government proceeded with determination to implement the plan once it had been set in motion, without regard to matters that should have been incorporated in the planning process. The relocatees would need caribou skins for bedding and clothing, which are vital for people living on the land. When the required skins were not available, the Department nevertheless proceeded with the relocation, and the relocatees went north with 60 instead of the 600 skins needed for clothing and bedding for the coming year. In addition, the relocatees arrived in the High Arctic without all the equipment they would need for life there.

The Spread of Tuberculosis to Resolute Bay

31. The Inuit community at Resolute Bay became infected with tuberculosis, which may have been carried from Inukjuak, resulting in additional hardship to the community as many members were transported south to hospital for extended periods.

The Eskimo Loan Fund was Used Improperly for Departmental Purposes

32. The trade stores in the new communities were funded through the Eskimo Loan Fund. There is no evidence that the arrangements for the loan were discussed with the relocatees before departure. The signature of one of the Inuit as the borrower would be obtained by the police after the relocatees arrived in the High Arctic. The loan arrangement lacked substance. The reality was that the Loan Fund was being used for departmental purposes, with an Inuk signing a loan agreement as a formality. The work of running the trade store was handled by the police. An Inuk signature on the loan agreement was a formality, not in the sense of being good legal form, but in the sense of something perfunctory and lacking in substance. In these circumstances, an Inuk's signature on loan documents does not imply consent to the loan.

Isolation in the High Arctic

33. The environment in the new High Arctic communities was, in addition to the dark period, considerably different from Inukjuak. Climactic conditions are more severe, and varieties of game are significantly more limited. The move to the High Arctic thus involved significant changes for the Inukjuak relocatees. The Inukjuak Inuit also suffered isolation from home and the larger community at Inukjuak as a result of separation from immediate family, extended family, and friends who remained at Inukjuak. There was also isolation from those non-Inuit facilities that did exist in the new communities as a result of the separation of the new Inuit settlements from non-Inuit facilities. Finally, isolation was created by the differences between the Inukjuak and Pond Inlet groups in very small communities consisting of only a few families.

The Hardship Adjusting to the New Land

34. The Inukjuak Inuit were placed in a situation where to survive they had to adapt to an area that was significantly different from the Inukjuak area in terms of climate, terrain and hunting conditions. There were also significant differences in the types and variety of game and fish available; this meant that the Inukjuak relocatees had to adapt their hunting techniques to the new conditions, to learn where and when various types of game could be

obtained most readily, and to adjust their equipment to the different terrain, particularly in the Grise Fiord area. Changes in diet were also required. At Grise Fiord, the Inukjuak Inuit would have to learn to obtain water from grounded icebergs. The Inukjuak Inuit were also used to burning wood, and although wood could be found in the base dump at Resolute Bay, at Grise Fiord, seal oil lamps were the only means of cooking and providing heat. The more severe weather and the periods of darkness made it more difficult to carry out daily tasks and required psychological adjustment. The Inukjuak Inuit found the adjustment difficult – and certainly much harder than they expected.

Risks to Inuit Health and Life in an Experimental Project and the Inadequacy of Measures to Prevent Hardship

35. The relocation was an experiment to see whether the Inuit could adjust to life in the High Arctic. There was real risk attached to the project if it turned out that the land could not support the Inuit or if the Inuit had severe difficulty learning how to exploit the resources of the new land. This risk would have become a reality at the Cape Herschel site if that aspect of the relocation had gone ahead. Game failed to materialize in the Cape Herschel area in the winter of 1953-54, and the land would not have been able to support the relocatees.

The supplies sent in for the trade stores at Resolute and Craig Harbour were not sufficient to support the people should they be unable to take sufficient game for food but were intended only to supplement what they could obtain from hunting. There is no evidence that the Department developed a contingency plan to take account of the possibility that game might not be sufficient to meet the communities' food needs. The inherent riskiness of the project was not discussed with the Inuit. They were simply assured that there was abundant game in the High Arctic and that they would have a better life.

Some of the supplies intended for Resolute Bay did not arrive; eventually the missing supplies were flown in by the RCAF sometime after January 1954, more than five months after they should have arrived. At both Craig Harbour/Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay, skins for clothing and bedding arrived late in the winter, in the early months of 1954. By contrast, if a Canadian government post had been established in the High Arctic and government personnel were missing essential items such as Arctic clothing and bedding, the government certainly would have arranged for these essential supplies to be sent immediately. The fact that the Department had arranged the relocation using the device of a loan limited the Department's financial ability to respond to contingencies that developed in what was in substance a government-initiated relocation. The project was insufficiently

funded, and as contingencies developed over the years, as when supplies failed to arrive, cost considerations would outweigh considerations of Inuit welfare. Contingencies were absorbed in the form of increased hardship for the relocatees.

Inadequate Provisions for Necessary Boats

36. Large boats formed an important part of life in Inukjuak and were an important aspect of status in the community. These boats had been left behind in Inukjuak. The relocatees believed that there would be boats available for them in the new land. No arrangements had been made to provide the Inuit relocatees with boats.

Hardship and Suffering the Result of an Inherently Unsound Plan

37. The relocation was not a case of an appropriate plan running into difficulty because of failures in carrying it out. The plan was inherently unsound, and the means necessary to carry it out were equally unsound. The failures in execution served only to aggravate the hardship and suffering inherent in the plan from the outset.

Inadequate Supplies for the Trade Stores

38. The small trade stores were chronically understocked and, particularly at Grise Fiord, people suffered hardship year after year through the 1950s.

Difficulty in Finding Spouses

39. The small size of the communities made it difficult for young people to find spouses.

Restrictions on Movement

40. Grise Fiord lacked the employment opportunities of Resolute Bay, yet people were effectively prevented from moving from Grise Fiord to Resolute Bay to join relatives or to pursue other opportunities.

The Failure to Honour the Promise to Return

41. The government failed to honour the promise to return, and the resulting hardship is not fully redressed by an offer to pay for a return many years after the return should have been provided. The lost years must be taken into account.

The Relocatees' Experiences were Predictable

42. The experiences of the relocatees were the predictable result of a scheme that was inherently coercive in its objective and coercive in the means chosen to achieve that objective. The other failings in planning and implementation, as well as the failure to honour the promise to return, compounded the hardship suffered by the relocatees.

The Government's Responsibilities

The November 20, 1992 response to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs reflects the government's view of its responsibilities. The government has addressed its responsibilities in terms of the following:

- the humanity of the relocation plan, purposes and objectives;
- the care and skill with which the relocation was planned and implemented;
- voluntariness as an essential requirement for Inuit participation; and
- that promises made be kept.

The government acknowledges that the promise to return was not honoured and that the planning and implementation, in some respects, were below the required level of care and skill. The government insists that the relocation was for a humane purpose and that Inuit participation was voluntary.

The four aspects of the government's responsibility, as they appear in the government's own response to the complaints, provide useful and flexible general criteria for assessing the government's responsibilities. The view that a relocation should be humane, should be carried out with care and skill, and should be based on the consent of the relocatees, and that promises made should be kept accords with the basic moral foundations of our society and the domestic legal principles that rest on that moral foundation. Various international human right agreements and declarations that have been made by civilized nations add further weight to a shared view of the proper role and responsibilities of government and of the rights and freedoms of human beings.

A fifth aspect of the government's responsibilities is also fundamental, namely, the authority of the government to undertake this project.

In this chapter we discuss, in light of our factual conclusions, the lack of proper authority for the government to proceed with the relocation; the involuntariness of the relocation; the lack of care and skill in planning and executing the relocations and the broken promises; the inhumanity of the project; and the breach of the government's fiduciary responsibilities.

The Lack of Proper Authority to Proceed with a Relocation

The relocation did not take place pursuant to specific legislation authorizing relocations. Rather, it took place the context of a general mandate concerning the administration of affairs in the North, including the welfare of the Inuit. Actions by the Department that involved the expenditure of money would rest on the Department's various authorizations to administer and expend funds. The Department had authority to spend money to transport Inuit and to provide relief to the Inuit. In 1953, it received authority to administer a Loan Fund for making loans to Inuit. These loans were to support the commercial activities of Inuit.

The Department thus had a broad policy and administrative mandate, a mandate broad enough to encompass a voluntary relocation scheme. In this case, however, there was a difficulty. New communities in the High Arctic would need trade stores. The establishment of trade stores was an essential and inseparable component of the plan. The Department did not have specific funds to establish and maintain government-owned trade stores. It was decided to use money from the Loan Fund for this purpose. However, no relocatee asked for a loan for this or any other purpose. No relocatee asked for a loan to be relocated. No relocatee proposed to establish a store as a commercial activity.²⁶⁰ The 'loan' was in reality no loan at all.

There is no evidence that the relocatees were informed, before going north, that a loan would be involved. They were told they would be looked after by the that government. The necessary documentation concerning the loan was sent to the High Arctic police detachments, which would be responsible for supervising the Inuit, with instructions that a leading Inuk should sign the forms but that the police should otherwise carry out the purposes for which the loan was being made, namely, the operation of the trade stores. It is clear that having one of the relocatees sign the loan documentation was merely a formality. It was, however, a formality in the sense that it was done simply to comply with the Department's

²⁶⁰ As discussed in relation to the 1952 meeting of the Committee on Eskimo Affairs, the Department was authorized under *The Appropriation Act, No. 3, 1953*, S.C. 1953, c. 54, Schedule A, Vote No. 546, to administer the Eskimo Loan Fund. Loans were required to be made to Inuit for Inuit "commercial activities".

wishes. It was not a formality in the sense of something done to symbolize the giving of consent to the loan.

This was, in fact, not a proper loan arrangement at all, and it cannot be seriously suggested that Inuit consent to the loan was given on a free and informed basis. The Loan Fund became a convenient vehicle for administrators to find money that they would not otherwise have had to create the trade stores, which were essential to the viability of the new communities. It was clearly taken for granted that the Inuit would comply with a request to sign loan documents. It was also taken for granted that the Department, through its agents, the police, could then simply deal with the funds in pursuit of the objectives of the program, because the Inuit would not assert their lawful rights as debtors and as the people entitled to the loan moneys. This action demonstrates vividly the attitudes of the administration toward the Inuit and the powerlessness and vulnerability of the Inuit.

This use of the Loan Fund took the relocation outside the scope of the Department's authority. It exceeded the authority that necessarily flows from the management of such a fund, namely, to give loans to qualified persons who seek such a loan for authorized purposes and accept the loan on the appropriate terms. The authorized purpose of the Eskimo Loan Fund was to promote the "commercial activities" of Inuit.²⁶¹ The Loan Fund was treated instead like an ordinary departmental budget item, to be disbursed as the Department saw fit. The money was used to establish what were in substance government trade stores. This was an unauthorized use of the Loan Fund. As a result, parliamentary authority over budgetary expenditures was circumvented. The project thus proceeded without proper authorization and, in particular, without proper expenditure authority. It was, in short, illegal.

The handling of family allowances and old age pensions raises further difficulties. The relocation scheme explicitly contemplated that family allowances and old age pensions might not be 'paid' to relocatees with goods from the trade store, but might instead be recorded as a form of forced savings.²⁶² This in fact happened. As discussed earlier, the forced savings related to the goal of requiring Inuit to rely more on hunting and less on trade goods. There was therefore an intentional withholding of the benefits of programs created by Parliament as universal programs. Here again the Department exceeded its authority.²⁶³

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*

²⁶² Although it is possible that Department withheld family allowance benefits as forced savings in other situations, this does not mean that the Department had authority for these practices.

²⁶³ The object of the *Family Allowances Act*, R.S.C. 1952, c.109, was to make an allowance for the benefit of children, as is evident in section 5, which provided that "The allowance shall be applied by the person receiving the same exclusively towards the maintenance, care, training, education and advancement of the child...", The Family Allowance Regulations (1955),

Finally, as noted above, there was no specific legislation authorizing relocations. The Department therefore had no legislative authority to engage in involuntary relocations. Only a voluntary relocation was within the scope of the Department's legal authority.²⁶⁴ The requirement for the consent of the relocatees is recognized by the government in its response to the Standing Committee.

The Involuntariness of the Relocation

The relocation scheme involved moving people from lands that they had occupied and exploited for centuries, long before Europeans came to North America. Although the policy and administrative mandate of the Department were broad enough to encompass a relocation scheme (if funds were available for the purpose), it was essential that any relocation proceed on a voluntary basis only. Consent must be free and informed. A basic requirement in any circumstance involving the obtaining of consent is that everything material to the giving of consent be disclosed and that there be no material misrepresentations.

In the case of the 1953-55 relocation, there was material non-disclosure, and there were material misrepresentations.

The true character of the relocation scheme was not disclosed to the Inukjuak Inuit. They had been identified by administrators as being in need of 'rehabilitation' because of their perceived dependence on trade goods and increasing

2 C.S.O.R. 1259 (consolidating and replacing PC/1953-321, March 5, 1953) authorized the Director of Family Allowances, when this was "in the best interests of an Eskimo child", to "direct that the allowance...be paid to the Northern Administration and Lands Branch [of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources] to be disbursed by such Branch on behalf of the child in accordance with arrangements between the Director and the said Branch". The arrangement for the payment of family allowances involved the RCMP issuing vouchers or tokens that were 'cashed' at the trade store for foodstuffs and other goods. Reuben Ploughman has described how the Inuit took goods from an approved list headed by items such as milk. Such a scheme would appear broadly consistent with the applicable legislation. However, a scheme that involved withholding the benefit of the allowance is not contemplated in the Act or Regulations. The Old Age Security Regulations (1955) 3 C.S.O.R. 2497 in section 14(4) required the pension, when paid to a person or agency other than the pensioner, "to be administered and expended for the benefit of the pensioner". The effect is the same. The pension was intended for the benefit of the pensioner. Action by the Department that prevented a pensioner from receiving the benefit of the pension would be contrary to the intent of the *Old Age Security Act*, R.S.C. 1952, c.200.

²⁶⁴ Necessity, such as may occur as a result of fire or flood, may confer some authority on the government to act with compulsion in the interests of public safety (although even in such cases this is generally provided for in legislation), but there is no suggestion that the 1953-55 relocation was founded on the extreme circumstances required for the application of the concept of necessity. The government has based its position on the belief that the relocation was voluntary. A mistaken *belief* that the relocation was voluntary is not, however, sufficient to bring the relocation within the scope of the Department's authority.

reliance on 'handouts' resulting from instability in the fur trade. Rehabilitation formed a significant component of the relocation scheme. The Inukjuak Inuit were not told of this aspect of the scheme before they went north. Moreover, the Inuit did not believe they were in need of rehabilitation. The rehabilitative aspect of the relocation was, as discussed previously, inherently coercive and gave rise to practices in the new communities that were also routinely coercive. Instead of being told the true purpose of the relocation, the Inukjuak Inuit were painted a picture of a land that was rich in game and where they could lead a "better life". A better life could only mean to them having everything they enjoyed at Inukjuak and more. This was not the "better life" the government had in mind for them. There was a fundamental misunderstanding of the purpose of the relocation.

The relocatees became unwitting candidates in a rehabilitation project where much of what they had come to expect in life was no longer available to them. Family allowances and old age pensions would nominally be paid to them, but they were deprived of the benefit of these payments because the stores often had insufficient trade goods on hand to permit them to issue goods in lieu of money. The relocatees' expectations were raised to levels that could not be met, and they were disappointed when they found that the large land mammals they had expected were not available except under strict rules. The combination of what was said and what was not said to the relocatees is sufficient to vitiate any consent that can be said to have been given.

The coercive aspects of the relocation lie at the heart of the relocatees' deep sense of grievance. The Inukjuak Inuit quickly became aware that they had been sent north because they were seen in some sense as having undesirable or bad characteristics. The Pond Inlet Inuit were told of the rehabilitative reasons for relocating the Inukjuak Inuit. Non-Inuit on the ships going north understood this to be the reason. Initially, the Inuit special constables at Craig Harbour showed their mistrust of the Inukjuak Inuit. The RCMP members at Craig Harbour and Resolute Bay acted according to their understanding of the rehabilitative character of the project. This was all deeply offensive to the Inukjuak relocatees and is at the root of a profound sense of resentment at being treated as less than fully capable and responsible people. From this perspective, the relocation is like a form of punishment for some perceived misbehaviour, with the relocatees feeling like the prisoners of the police. Rehabilitation without the consent of the rehabilitated involves the fundamental denial of individual freedom, human equality, and personal dignity.

Other factors also affect the giving of consent.

The relocation project was inherently risky. There was a risk that game in the areas surrounding the new settlements would not be sufficient to support them. There was a risk that the relocatees might not be able to adapt to the new conditions. Either risk, had it materialized, would have involved grave hardship for

the relocatees and put their safety in jeopardy. These risks were material and should have been discussed with the Inuit. Inuit have long experience with the risks of living in Arctic, and some might have accepted the risks of a pioneering project in the High Arctic. But the risks were not discussed with the relocatees; instead they were assured of a better life. This is a further aspect of material non-disclosure and misrepresentation, vitiating whatever consent may have been said to have been given.

Nor can it be said that consent was given freely. Although the plan was that the relocatees would go north only if they were willing to go, the relocation took place in a cultural context where the appearance of Inuit consent was known not always to reflect genuine consent. There is nothing in the planning or implementation to indicate a recognition of this issue or how this issue was to be addressed. Special care was called for in these circumstances to ensure that the consent that was given was genuine.

In this regard, there were two aspects to the problem. First, there was the broad cultural context of Inuit and non-Inuit relations in which Inuit tended to view non-Inuit as the 'bosses', telling the Inuit what to do. This was reflected in a more specific context in forced relocations from the Inukjuak area to other parts of Quebec and to islands in Hudson Bay. It is not clear that anything in the government's approach to the 1953-55 relocation plan distinguished it, in the minds of Inuit, from other government-initiated but overtly forced relocations. The RCMP member responsible for contacting the Inuit had been posted to the Arctic the previous summer, and this was his first contact with Inuit. He understood his job to be selling the Inuit on the project. It is entirely understandable, given this context, that some of the relocatees considered that they had no real choice but to go. Second, the attitude of administrators appears to have reflected a belief, founded on long experience, that the Inuit would comply with the wishes of the government. This is clearly evident in the handling of the Loan Fund.

The onus was on the government to obtain, and hence be able to demonstrate that it had obtained, true consent to the relocation. The evidence supporting the consent that the government says was given is weak and is insufficient to demonstrate that all who went north went of their own free will. Such freely given consent as can be said to have been given by any of the Inuit was, as discussed, vitiated by material non-disclosure and misrepresentations.

The failure to honour the promise to return also relates to the issue of consent. The relocatees agreed to go north on the understanding that they would be returned home if they wished. This is like someone who agrees to go into a locked room to which someone else holds the key on the understanding that they will be let out at their request. If the person who holds the key fails to unlock the door, the person in the room cannot be said to have consented to staying there. At that point, the person is being kept in the room against the person's will. In the case of the High Arctic relocation, the government held the

key. The government has acknowledged that it failed to honour the promise to return. That failure in itself made the relocatees' continued stay in the High Arctic non-consensual.

The significance of the failure to return the relocatees when they wished to return is reinforced by the uncertain and risky nature of the project. The uncertainty and risk were captured accurately in the term used by officials, who referred to the project as an 'experiment'. As discussed earlier, this aspect of the project made continuing consent to the relocation necessary, with a corresponding obligation on the government to return the relocatees. This obligation was not limited to one or two years. It continued as long as the relocation "experiment" could lead to the relocatees becoming unwilling to stay in the High Arctic. Some people experienced dissatisfaction early on. For others, dissatisfaction may have been the result of longer-term separation from home and kin. The government had a continuing responsibility to the relocatees to respond to unhappiness and dissatisfaction resulting from the relocation, whether the effects were short-term or long-term. The potential for longer-term unhappiness was predictable, given the attachment of Inuit to homeland and kin.

The Pond Inlet Inuit have not said that they did not go willingly; in fact, the indications are that they did go willingly. They lived in a High Arctic environment and were familiar with the areas to the north and west of Pond Inlet. The project did involve some risk for them, but less risk than for the Inukjuak relocatees. There was a misunderstanding about compensation, and they suffered hardship related to lack of care and skill in planning and executing the relocation. Expectations about the availability of large land mammals at Grise Fiord were not met. The question of returning home also appears less fundamental in the case of the Pond Inlet Inuit. The Pond Inlet Inuit also played a different part in the relocation than the Inukjuak Inuit. In all the circumstances, it does not appear that these various aspects of non-disclosure or misrepresentation are so fundamental as to undermine the consent they gave to go north.

Lack of Care and Skill and Broken Promises

The relocation scheme was thus fundamentally flawed. Other mistakes compounded the fundamental errors. The broken promises are inter-related with the lack of care and skill.

The arrangements for trade store operations, which prevented the benefit of family allowances and old age pensions from reaching the intended recipients, were highly inappropriate.

First, they reflect adversely on the care and skill applied in planning and implementing the project. The Loan Fund mechanism provided insufficient funds to stock the stores in a way that would meet the relocatees' demand for goods. This situation existed for years. Initially, this may have been a miscalculation,

but the problems of supply eventually became known. The lack of care and skill is therefore inexcusable.

Second, it seems that, even at the outset, this situation did not arise inadvertently. The rehabilitative character of the project was driven by a concern that the Inukjuak Inuit looked too much to the government for 'handouts'. Included in the official understanding of 'handouts' was not only relief, which was issued in cases of need, but also family allowances and old age pensions, which were universally available to Canadians. It was recognized from the outset that supplies sent to the stores would be limited and that some rationing would be involved. There is explicit reference to the fact that income, including family allowance and old age pensions, that could not be issued in the form of goods would become forced savings. As such, the handling of family allowances and old age pensions moves from the realm of lack of care and skill to the intentional and discriminatory withholding of these benefits notwithstanding a legal entitlement to them.

No contingency plan was in place in case the risks of the project became a reality. The risks at Resolute Bay were substantially less because of the presence of the base. However, Grise Fiord and the proposed Cape Herschel site were more isolated, with no ready access to air transportation. It would not have been easy to remove people from Ellesmere Island, and supplying those communities by air drop would have been a major undertaking for which no preparations had been made. It is simply luck that the ship could not get through to Cape Herschel in 1953, with the result that the community was not established. The game at Cape Herschel that year would not have supported the new community.

Contingency planning would quite possibly have required the involvement of the RCAF, yet the Department chose not to involve the RCAF in its decision-making processes and, when the RCAF expressed concerns that it would be called upon to provide support, the Department assured the RCAF that this would not happen. The consequence of such jealousy of jurisdiction was to increase the risk to the relocatees. When the RCAF was prepared, in 1956 for example, to provide assistance on a cost-recovery basis, the Department could not cover the RCAF's costs. It had failed to obtain a budget to provide this necessary support for the new communities. This was itself a direct consequence of the inappropriate decision to use the Eskimo Loan Fund to establish and sustain the trade stores in the new communities.

The project planning also failed to take account of the basic cultural and social needs and wishes of the Inuit themselves. In particular, Inuit attachment to homeland and kin was well known at the time. It was entirely predictable that the relocatees would have a need to see their families and their homelands again. Yet no provision was made for maintaining close contact between the new communities and the home communities. This was a major failing in the planning and has contributed substantially to the persistence of the relocatees' grievance.

The isolation and small size of the new communities, coupled with the inability of people to go back to Inukjuak, meant that young people had considerable difficulty finding marriage partners. This had a significant impact, both on the individuals concerned and on the fabric of the community as the network of relations was disrupted. This failing was compounded by the fact that the relocatees were promised that they could return home if they wished. However, the means to do so were never incorporated into the plan and were never made available to the Inuit. In the end, the government failed to honour its promise. The injury that the relocatees have suffered as a result of these failings will not be cured simply by paying for people to return home more than 30 years after they wanted to go home. The lost decades must be taken into account.

The Pond Inlet Inuit were recruited by Idlout on behalf of the RCMP, who in turn were acting on behalf of the Department. The Pond Inlet relocatees believed that they would be compensated for providing a service to the government – assisting the Inukjuak Inuit to adjust to life in the High Arctic. The government had no intention of paying compensation, but that was not the impression conveyed to the Pond Inlet relocatees. Any failure of its ‘agents’ properly to establish the terms of the arrangement must rest with the government, not with those who were induced to go north.²⁶⁵ While this misunderstanding provides a basis for compensation to the Pond Inlet Inuit, the circumstances do not support a conclusion that the Pond Inlet Inuit were used as forced labour. The Pond Inlet Inuit also suffered many of the hardships of the Inukjuak Inuit in terms of the lack of care and skill in planning and implementation and the shortages at the stores in the new communities.

The project suffered from other deficiencies in planning and implementation that added to the hardships suffered by the relocatees. These included the lack of skins for essential bedding and clothing, supplies that failed to arrive, the sacrificing of Inuit welfare for cost considerations, chronically inadequate trade supplies, the absence of comprehensive game studies, which limited the growth of the new communities and contributed to the separation of families, and the general minimization and discounting of Inuit needs and aspirations.

In summary, various aspects of the project demonstrated significant lack of care and skill, causing hardship and suffering to the relocatees to whom the government owed a duty of care. As such, the government was negligent in the planning, implementation and continuing supervision of the project.

²⁶⁵ There is no evidence that subsequent conversations between the Pond Inlet Inuit and government officials made clear that compensation was not intended. The evidence indicates that these conversations focused on where the Inuit would be going and what their role was to be.

Inhumane Effects

The government has stated that the relocation was humane in its intent. Humane acts involve treating people as people. Our humanity rests on the fundamental equality of all people as human beings. This principle has been elaborated and confirmed in many international instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 10, 1948.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights reflects a shared view among civilized peoples about the fundamental and inalienable rights of all people and the proper role and responsibilities of governments. Among the rights declared to be enjoyed by every human being are the following:

- equality before the law and equal protection of the law without discrimination (s. 7);
- the right of freedom of movement and of residence (s. 13);
- freedom from inhuman or degrading treatment (s. 5);
- freedom from arbitrary interference with privacy, family, home or correspondence (s. 12);
- freedom from arbitrary detention or exile (s. 9);
- the right to a standard of living adequate for health and well-being including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age, or other lack of livelihood (s. 25);
- the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment; the right, without discrimination, to equal pay for equal work; the right to just and favourable remuneration, ensuring an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented if necessary, by other means of social protection (s. 23);
- the right to marry and the obligation of the state to afford special protection to the family as the natural and fundamental group unit of society (s. 16);
- generally the right to life, liberty and security of the person (s. 3);
- enjoyment of these rights and freedoms without distinction of any kind as to, among other things, race (s. 2).

These rights are enjoyed by all people as a natural consequence of human existence and the inherent equality of human beings. These rights were recognized by the government of Canada at the time of the relocation and have been elaborated and confirmed in subsequent international instruments to which Canada is also a party.

The rehabilitative aspects of the plan failed to respect the fundamental equality that is the right of every human being. Rehabilitation was imposed on the Inukjuak Inuit without regard to their own wishes and aspirations. The scheme was, as discussed, inherently coercive in its design and in the means chosen to

carry it out. The separation of the relocatees into different groups was, as discussed, clearly a forced separation. Moreover, the government undertook a major relocation to isolated places without the funding and plans in place to deal with the predictable need of the relocatees to maintain contact with their relations and homelands. Many relocatees were kept in the High Arctic against their will. Time and time again the welfare of the relocatees would be sacrificed to cost considerations. The needs and aspirations of the Inuit were routinely minimized or discounted. The benefits of universal programs such as family allowance were withheld. It would be years before the new communities had the facilities – such as schools, churches, and nursing stations – that were available at Inukjuak in 1953. Aspirations to marry and establish families were delayed, made more difficult, or frustrated entirely.

The concern of the government for Inuit welfare was undoubtedly a serious one, and the difficulties facing administrators were significant. The government did what it believed best for the Inuit in the institutional context of the time. However, in the result, the relocation plan was an ill-conceived solution that was inhumane and damaging in its design and its effects. The conception, planning, execution, and continuing supervision of the relocation did not accord with Canada's then prevailing international commitments.

Fiduciary Responsibility

The approach taken to obtaining consent, and the government's defence of that approach, reflect an attitude to consent that is consistent with the obtaining of consent in ordinary commercial transactions between people in equal bargaining positions. The concept of consent in such situations is founded on an assumption of relative equality between the parties.²⁶⁶ Both are assumed to be capable of looking after their own affairs in a prudent and diligent manner. Yet the entire pattern of dealings with Inuit reflects the unequal position of the Inuit and the government. The issue of consent must be situated in this context of inequality.

It is confused thinking to conceive a project founded on an assumption of the inequality of the Inuit, yet to rest consent on an assumption of equality. Yet confusion characterized the government's view of the Inuit. On one hand, the government recognized that the Inuit were in a vulnerable and powerless condition in their relationship with non-Inuit Canadian society. On the other hand, the Inuit were thought to be no different in law from other Canadians. This confusion persisted notwithstanding the 1939 judgement of the Supreme Court of Canada that Inuit had the same constitutional status as Indians. Although the

²⁶⁶ The equality at issue here relates to, for example, equality of knowledge, information and experience, not fundamental equality as human beings. It is a fact that some people are in vulnerable positions, and our respect for them as human beings leads to special consideration to ensure that they are not mistreated.

government acted toward the Inuit with all the power and authority of the father, then, it failed fully to appreciate that this position of trust carried with it a heavy burden of fiduciary responsibility. This was the responsibility of government as an institution. Responsibility for failings does not depend on a finding of whether individuals were or were not derelict in their duties. Institutional failings, such as occurred in the High Arctic relocation, can result in a failure to carry out the fiduciary responsibilities of government.

The responsibility of the government to Aboriginal peoples was articulated by the Supreme Court of Canada in *Sparrow v. The Queen*. The Court stated as follows:

The government has the responsibility to act in a fiduciary capacity with respect to aboriginal peoples. The relationship between the Government and aborigines is trust like, rather than adversarial, and contemporary recognition and affirmation of aboriginal rights must be defined in light of this historic relationship.²⁶⁷

In its fiduciary relationship with Aboriginal peoples, the government is held to a “strict standard of conduct”.²⁶⁸ Fiduciary responsibilities carry with them a special duty of care. The fiduciary standard is no less applicable to events in the 1950s than to events in the 1990s.²⁶⁹

Events in the 1950s must, of course, be considered in light of what was known or reasonably foreseeable at the time. One must be careful not to colour an appreciation of the facts as they existed with today’s knowledge and beliefs. Taking these cautions into account, it is clear that the government failed in its fiduciary responsibilities to the relocatees in the conception, planning, implementation, and continuing supervision of the relocation.

The government’s actions in relation to the relocation continued over time. For many years the trade stores were operated in effect as government stores. The RCMP worked under the direction of the Department in providing “supervision” and “encouragement” to the relocatees. The promise to return was not honoured, and many relocatees remained in the High Arctic for years against their will. Families and communities suffered through all of this. The government’s responsibilities to the relocatees were of a continuing nature. For the government to satisfy its fiduciary responsibilities, recent offers to return the relocatees are not sufficient. The lost decades and the harm that resulted from the relocation must be taken into account.

²⁶⁷ *Sparrow v. The Queen* [1990] 1 S.C.R. 1975 at 1108.

²⁶⁸ *Guerin v. The Queen* [1984] 2 S.C.R. 335 per Dickson, J. at 384.

²⁶⁹ Guerin involved a situation that originated in 1958.

The failings discussed in this report were not, as mentioned earlier, the failings of individuals. There was broad support for relocations both within and outside government, including the churches and the Hudson's Bay Company. The failings were primarily institutional and, more broadly, societal.

Conclusion

The Commission has considered the government's responsibilities in terms of five general criteria, which are capable of flexible application to cases such as this. These criteria appear explicitly or implicitly in the government's own response to the complaints of the relocatees. They are as follows:

1. The authority of the government to proceed with a relocation, which involves consideration of specific legislation that might authorize relocations, the general mandate of the Department concerned, the authority conferred through budgetary appropriations, and whether what was done falls within the scope of what was authorized in law.
2. Voluntariness as an essential requirement of participation by the relocatees, which involves consideration of whether consent was free and informed. This leads to an examination of whether there were any material misrepresentations; whether everything material to the giving of consent was disclosed, including any risks associated with the relocation; whether, given any cultural factors that may have affected the giving of consent, special care was taken to ensure that any apparent consent given was real consent; whether consent was conditional on the government fulfilling, before or after the relocation, any promises; and whether the right to withdraw consent and to request a return was respected, for example, in light of the risky or experimental nature of the relocation. In this regard, the onus is on the government to obtain free and informed consent and to be able to demonstrate that it has obtained such consent.
3. The care and skill with which the relocation was planned, implemented and supervised. This includes consideration of the extent to which attention was paid, for example, to important cultural and social needs of the relocatees.
4. The promises made and whether these were kept. This is related to voluntariness and care and skill but also reflects the question of whether the government has honoured the bargain it made in consideration of any agreement to relocate.
5. The humanity of the relocation, which relates to the fundamental equality of all people as human beings. This principle has been elaborated and confirmed in many international instruments addressing, among other things, the right of all people to liberty and security, both physical and mental, and to enjoy one's culture in association with other members of society.

These principles inform both our moral and our legal judgements. They are principles that apply to all and, in the case of Aboriginal peoples, are reinforced by the fiduciary responsibilities of the government. The content and the discussion of these principles in this case necessarily reflects the issues of the case. Other issues in other cases may require further elaboration of these principles. The application of these principles depends on the facts of each case, and events must be considered in light of what was known or reasonably foreseeable at the relevant time. Care must be taken not to colour an appreciation of the facts as they existed with today's knowledge and beliefs.

In conclusion, the relocation took place in circumstances that exceeded the government's legal authority. The relocation cannot be said to have been voluntary. It was planned and implemented in many respects with a lack of care and skill. Promises that were made were not kept. The relocation was inhumane in its design and its effects. As a result, the government failed in its fiduciary responsibilities to the relocatees. These failings primarily affect the Inukjuak relocatees. There was a misunderstanding concerning compensation as regards the Pond Inlet Inuit, for which the government should accept responsibility. In addition, the Pond Inlet Inuit suffered many of the hardships caused by lack of care and skill.

11

Recommendations

Preamble

The Commission's process has allowed new light to be shed on the relocation. The apparent conflicts in the evidence have been reconciled.

The government's characterization of the relocation, as set out in its response to the Standing Committee, has been seen to be based on misconceptions. These misconceptions have existed for decades. The oral testimony of the relocatees has provided the insight needed to recognize the long-standing misunderstandings that lie at the heart of the relocatees' complaints.

The relocation was not aimed at relieving population pressure on limited game resources. There was no population growth in the Inukjuak area in the early 1950s and the game situation had not changed in 30 to 40 years. The concern was with the ability of the fur trade to sustain the income levels to which Inukjuak Inuit had become accustomed. Officials considered that greater reliance on hunting and less reliance on the trade store would restore a perceived loss of Inuit self-reliance and moral decline. Greater reliance on hunting would substitute for the income that fur trading would, in the long term, be unable to provide.

Everywhere in the Arctic, hunting was cyclical in nature, even in areas of relative abundance. The relocation would not alter these cycles and would not alter the hardship experienced by people who lived by hunting during adverse game cycles or weather conditions. It was recognized in the Department that the cyclical nature of hunting could and did lead to periodic famine and starvation.

This was considered the natural state for the Inuit. The goal of the relocation was to restore the Inuit to what was considered to be their proper state. It was a rehabilitation project.

Relocation to the uninhabited High Arctic Islands was reinforced in a material way by concern for Canada's sovereignty.

The propriety of the government's actions concerning the relocation requires consideration of the following:

- the authority to proceed with a relocation;
- voluntariness as an essential requirement to participation;
- the care and skill with which the relocation was planned and implemented;
- whether promises that were made were kept;
- the overall humanity of the relocation.

The Department proceeded with the High Arctic relocation without proper authority. The relocation was not voluntary. It proceeded without free and informed consent. There were material misrepresentations, and material information was not disclosed. The true nature of the relocation – that is, a rehabilitation project – and the inherent risks were not disclosed. Nor can it be said, given the cultural factors affecting the giving of consent, that consent was given freely. Moreover, many Inuit were kept in the High Arctic for many years against their will when the government refused to respond to their requests to return.

The government was negligent in its planning and implementation of the relocation. It did not keep the promises made to the relocatees.

The relocation was an ill-conceived solution that was inhumane in its design and its effects. The conception, planning, execution and continuing supervision of the relocation did not accord with Canada's then prevailing international human rights commitments. The government, in the final analysis, failed in its fiduciary responsibilities to the relocatees.

Great wrongs have been done to the relocatees, and it is incumbent on the government to accept the fundamental merit of the relocatees' complaints. This acceptance is the only basis upon which reconciliation between the Inuit and the government is possible.

The process of reconciliation will be assisted if the parties are able to come to terms with each other. This requires the government to meet with representatives of the relocatees to negotiate in good faith and settle redress. The measures it has adopted to date are not adequate. The inadequacy of the redress offered to date, and the government's decision that an apology would not be appropriate, reflects the fact that the government has not recognized the full extent of the wrongs done to the Inuit.

An acknowledgement of the wrongs suffered by the relocatees and their families, as well as their communities, coupled with an apology is warranted.

An acknowledgement of the special contribution of the relocatees to the maintenance of Canadian sovereignty in the High Arctic is appropriate.

The relocation has had immediate and continuing effects on the relocatees and the affected communities. Some of the effects have specific monetary elements, such as lost property or the infrastructure requirements of the community. Other effects are more general and far-reaching, such as the pain and suffering of individuals, families, and communities caused by the relocation and the decades of separation and isolation. Compensation in an adequate amount and form, taking account of the specific and general effects of the relocation, is warranted. Compensation might be to individuals or to a community and might involve a fund or facilities or services. This should be settled between the government and representatives of the relocatees. The process of negotiations should be agreed to by representatives of the relocatees and be acceptable to the individuals and communities concerned.

Compensation must take account of the pain and suffering caused by the relocation and should include

- provision for returning, including re-establishment in the home community;
- provision for visiting between separated families;
- funding, for example, for additional services to assist in the readjustment of returnees or to assist all those who continue to be adversely affected by the relocation; and
- settlement of individual claims for compensation such as, but not necessarily restricted to, work done or services rendered for which payment was not received and for personal property lost or left behind.

These elements are not intended to restrict the negotiation of additional elements or the amount and form of compensation. The costs, including future costs, incurred by the relocatees, or their representatives, in attempting to resolve these complaints should also be reimbursed. The government has already undertaken to pay some costs of returns, visits, and additional housing. These are steps in the right direction.

Recommendations

The Commission therefore recommends as follows:

1. The Government should acknowledge the wrongs done to the Inuit and apologize to the relocatees.
2. The Government should acknowledge the special contribution of the relocatees to the maintenance of Canadian sovereignty in the High Arctic.

3. The Government should meet with representatives of the relocatees to settle all aspects of compensation with respect to the relocation, in relation both to the Inukjuak and the Pond Inlet relocatees, and with respect to the affected communities.
4. The process of negotiation should be agreed to by the representatives of the relocatees and be acceptable to the individuals and communities concerned.
5. Compensation should be in the amount and form agreed to between the parties to the settlement; should take account of the specific and general effects of the relocation, including the pain and suffering it caused; and should include, as a minimum, the following elements:
 - provision for returning, including re-establishment in the home community;
 - provision for visiting between separated families;
 - funding, for example, for additional services to assist in the readjustment of returnees or to assist all those who continue to be adversely affected by the relocation; and
 - settlement of individual claims for compensation such as, but not necessarily restricted to, work done or services rendered for which payment was not received and for personal property lost or left behind.
6. The costs, including future costs, incurred by the relocatees or their representatives in attempting to resolve these complaints should be reimbursed.

Appendix 1

Witnesses at the Commission's Hearings of April 5–8, 1993

Name	Birth Date	Birthplace	Relocation Date	Destination	Present Residence	Year of Return
Akpaliapik, Simon	1921	Pond Inlet	1953	Grise Fiord	Pond Inlet	1983
Allakariallak, Elizabeth	1957	Resolute Bay	n/a		Resolute Bay	
Allakariallak, Minnie	1916	Inukjuak	1955	Resolute Bay	Resolute Bay	
Amagoalik, Jaybeddie	1935	Inukjuak	1953	Resolute Bay	Inukjuak	1979
Amagoalik, John	1947	Inukjuak	1953	Resolute Bay	Ottawa	
Amagoalik, Lizzie	1938	Inukjuak	1955	Resolute Bay	Inukjuak	1979
Amagoalik, Paul	1953	<i>C.D. Howe</i>	1953	Resolute Bay	Resolute Bay	
Amagoalik, Sarah	1937	Inukjuak	1953	Resolute Bay	Resolute Bay	
Amagoalik, Simeonie	1933	Inukjuak	1953	Resolute Bay	Resolute Bay	
Amaraulik, Jaybeddie	1915	Pond Inlet	1953	Resolute Bay	Pond Inlet	1974
Arnakallak, Samuel	1925	Pond Inlet	1953	Grise Fiord	Pond Inlet	1957
Arrugutainaq, Maina	1944	Inukjuak	1955	Arctic Bay, Grise Fiord	Sanikiluaq	1963, 1972
Attagutaluk, Mary	1950	Inukjuak	1955	Resolute Bay	Pond Inlet	1991
Audlaluk, Larry	1950	Inukjuak	1953	Grise Fiord	Grise Fiord	
Eckalook, George	1946	Inukjuak	1955	Resolute Bay	Resolute Bay	
Eliasialuk, Samwillie	1936	Inukjuak	1953	Grise Fiord	Inukjuak	1979
Epoo, Johnny	1947	Inukjuak	n/a		Inukjuak	
Epoo, Lazarusie	1932	Inukjuak	n/a		Inukjuak	
Flaherty, Martha	1950	Inukjuak	1955	Grise Fiord	Ottawa	
Flaherty, Rynie	1928	Inukjuak	1955	Grise Fiord	Grise Fiord	
Idlout-Paulson, Leah	1940	Pond Inlet	1955	Resolute Bay	Ottawa	1961
Iqaluk, Andrew	1929	Inukjuak	1955	Resolute Bay	Inukjuak	1982
Iqaluk, Jackoosie	1933	Inukjuak	1955	Resolute Bay	Inukjuak	1977
Killiktee, Minnie	1940	Inukjuak	1953	Grise Fiord	Iqaluit	1974
Nungaq, Anna	1927	Inukjuak	1953	Grise Fiord	Inukjuak	1988
Nungaq, Minnie	1950	Inukjuak	1955	Resolute Bay	Resolute Bay	
Nutaraq, Elijah	1932	Inukjuak	1953	Grise Fiord	Inukjuak	1988
Nutaraq, Elisapee	1943	Inukjuak	1953	Grise Fiord	Inukjuak	1988
Patsauq, Bobbie	1960	Resolute Bay	n/a		Inukjuak	1974
Patsauq, Markoosie	1941	Inukjuak	1953	Resolute Bay	Inukjuak	1975
Pudluk, Dora	1943	Inukjuak	1955	Resolute Bay	Resolute Bay	
Salluvinik, Allie	1949	Inukjuak	1953	Resolute Bay	Resolute Bay	
Salluvinik, Susan	1953	Pond Inlet	1955	Resolute Bay	Resolute Bay	

Appendix 2

Witnesses at the Commission's Hearings of June 28-30 and July 5, 1993

Armand Brousseau and Pierre Desnoyers, former members of RCAF stationed at Resolute Bay 1953-54.

Mary Carpenter, daughter of Fred Carpenter, an Inuk who received a loan in 1953 under the Eskimo Loan Fund.

***Dr. Robert Christie**, retired officer with the Geological Survey of Canada who worked in the High Arctic in the 1960s.

Mark Denhez, a lawyer who has worked with the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada on Arctic sovereignty.

Wilfred Doucette, a photographer who made many visits to the High Arctic, including visits in 1951, 1952, 1953, 1954, and 1956.

***Cley Fryer**, retired member of the RCMP who was stationed at Craig Harbour in 1953.

Ross Gibson, former RCMP member stationed at Port Harrison (Inukjuak) in 1952-53 and then in Resolute Bay.

Professor Shelagh Grant, Department of History, Trent University.

Professor Magnus Gunther, Trent University.

Gerard Kenney, a private citizen who has studied the relocations extensively.

Gordon Larsen and Doreen Larsen-Riedel, the son and daughter of and custodians of the papers of Henry Larsen, a senior RCMP officer with responsibility for RCMP activities in the Arctic at the time of the relocations who retired with the rank of Superintendent.

Alan Marcus, Doctoral Candidate, Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge University.

Bud Neville, retired from the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and, as a consultant, worked for Hickling Corporation in preparation of a report on the relocations for the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

Professor David Orkin, McGill University.

*Written presentation only.

Professor Donat Pharand, Professor Emeritus, University of Ottawa.

Bob Pilot, former RCMP member stationed at Craig Harbour beginning in 1955 and later worked with the Government of the Northwest Territories becoming Deputy Commissioner of the Northwest Territories.

Reuben Ploughman, who was the Manager of the Hudson's Bay Store at Port Harrison (Inukjuak) in 1953-54.

Gordon Robertson, a former Deputy Minister of Resources and Development and Commissioner of the Northwest Territories who retired after serving as Secretary to the Cabinet and Secretary to the Cabinet for Federal-Provincial Relations.

Graham Rowley, who was Secretary and Co-ordinator for the Co-ordinating Committee on Northern Development at the time of the relocations and served for many years as a senior adviser to government.

Bent Sivertz, who was the Executive Assistant to the Deputy Minister, Department of Resources and Development, at the time of the relocations in 1953 and later held positions of increasing seniority, becoming Commissioner of the Northwest Territories.

Dr. Gordon W. Smith, a former university professor and public servant and still active Arctic scholar.

Professor Daniel Soberman, Faculty of Law, Queen's University.

Doug Wilkinson, who spent many years in the Arctic beginning in 1945 filming and living with the Inuit.

Professor R. G. Williamson, Department of Anthropology, University of Saskatchewan.

Appendix 3

Table of Contents of Supporting Summary

VOLUME I

General Introduction.....	1
The High Arctic Relocation, 1953 (<i>map</i>)	3
Witnesses at the Commission's Hearings of April 5-8, 1993	4
Witnesses at the Commission's Hearings of June 28-30 and July 5, 1993 ..	6
Inuit Families Relocated and Moved, 1953 and 1955	8
Bibliography	13

Part 1

The Voices of the Relocated

Introduction	17
The Inuit Cultural Context.....	18
Summary of Individual Presentations	29
Individual Summaries	34
Minnie Allakariallak	34
Samwillie Elijahsalak	38
Simeonie Amagoalik.....	47
Lazarusie Epoo.....	54
Anna Nungaq	59
Elijah Nutaraq.....	63
Larry Audlaluk	67
Jaybeddie Amagoalik.....	70
Sarah Amagoalik.....	72
Martha Flaherty	76
Samuel Arnakallak.....	78
Jaybeddie Amaraulik	82
Simon Akpaliapik	86
John Amagoalik	87
Minnie Killiktee	90
Andrew Iqaluk	91
Markoosie Patsauq	93
Jackoosie Iqaluk.....	96
Dora Pudluk	98
Rynie Flaherty	99
Mary Attagutaluk	101
Lizzie Amagoalik.....	102
Maina Arragutainaq	106

Leah Idlout-Paulson	108
Elisapee Nutaraq	109
Johnny Epoo	110
Allie Salluvinik	111
Minnie Nungak	112
Elizabeth Allakariallak	112
Bobby Patsauq	114
Paul Amagoalik	115
Susan Salluviniq	116
George Eckalook	116

Part 2

The Voices of Former Officials and Others

Introduction	119
Summary of Individual Presentations	122
Individual Summaries	127
Gordon Robertson	127
Bent Sivertz	134
Graham Rowley	143
Gordon Larsen	158
Ross Gibson	168
Bob Pilot	181
Reuben Ploughman	186
Doug Wilkinson	192
Armand Brousseau and Pierre Desnoyers	196
Gerard Kenney	199
Wilfred Doucette	223
A.C. Fryer	231
Robert L. Christie	237

VOLUME II

Part 3

The Administration's View of an Eskimo Problem and the Relocation Scheme

Introduction	247
Differing Views on the Reasons for the Relocation	249
Eskimo Administration in Canada:	
The Historical Context	253
Introduction	253
Early Impact of Europeans and the Whaling Economy	257

Arrival of the Fur Traders, Arrival of the Missionaries, Government Concerns about Sovereignty	262
Government Neglect in the 1920s and Economic and Health Conditions in the Arctic	266
The Great Depression and the Collapse of Fur Prices.....	274
The 1934 Relocation to the High Arctic.....	278
Impact of Wartime Activities.....	283
The Beginnings of Change after the War	284
Events Leading up to the Relocation Decision.....	291
The 1949 Collapse of Fur Prices and the Cantley Report.....	291
Relocations as a Solution	308
Initial Steps.....	317
Re-Opening the Ellesmere Island RCMP Detachments.....	321
The 1952 Eskimo Affairs Conference	326
Reports of Conditions in the 1952 Period	338
First Meeting of Committee on Eskimo Affairs	348
The Beginnings of a Plan.....	352
Sovereignty and the Advisory Committee on Northern Development	361
The Relocation Decision.....	368
Other Events.....	383
Implementing the Decision	388
RCAF Concerns.....	406
Directions to the RCMP	416
Continuing Discussion of Eskimo Policy	422

Part 4

Events After the Relocation

Introduction	437
Differing Views on the Success or Lack of Success of the Relocation.....	438
The First Year	443
The Different Conditions from those at Inukjuak.....	443
Some Supplies Not Delivered to Resolute Bay.....	445
First Winter at Resolute Bay	445
Marshall's November 1953 Report on Conditions at Resolute Bay	448
First Winter at Craig Harbour	450
Reports of Inuit Satisfaction	451
Conditions at Craig Harbour at the End of 1954	453
Use of Carving Material	454
Reports of Requests for Relatives to Come to the New Communities.....	455
Income Level.....	456
Freeman's View of the Significance of Paddy's Death.....	459
Questions About the Eskimo Loan Fund.....	460
Plans to Move Additional Families in 1954.....	461

Memorandum of Guidance on Release of Information on Northern Activities.....	462
Cantley's Comments on the Promise to Return	463
Subsequent Years	464
1955	464
Conditions at Craig Harbour	464
Conditions at Resolute Bay.....	466
Requests for Additional Families to Come to the New Communities.....	466
Relations between the Inukjuak and Pond Inlet Inuit	467
Problems Finding Spouses.....	467
1956.....	468
Conditions at Craig Harbour/Grise Fiord.....	468
Conditions at Resolute Bay and Requests to Return Home.....	469
Eastern Arctic Patrol Report of Requests to Return Home	470
Requests for Additional Families to Come North	471
Failure to Deliver Supplies to Resolute Bay.....	472
Complaints About Handling of Supplies.....	473
Disappointment of Inuit and Questions about Accounts.....	473
Report that Inuit Were Doing Well	474
Employment at Resolute Bay, Expressions of Satisfaction, Improvements.....	474
Expressions of Caution about Further Relocations and a Mention of the Promise to Return.....	475
Operation of the Trading Stores, the Loan Fund, and a Mention of the Promise to Return.....	478
Sovereignty and the New Settlements.....	480
1957	480
Conditions at Grise Fiord.....	480
Conditions at Resolute Bay, the Measles Epidemic, Problems with the Accounts at the Store.....	481
1958	484
Conditions at Grise Fiord and Complaints about Inadequate Supplies.....	484
Operation of the Trading Stores.....	489
Conditions at Grise Fiord, Problems Finding Spouses, Housing	491
Relations between the Inukjuak and Pond Inlet Inuit	493
Conditions at Resolute Bay.....	494
Concerns about Moving More People to the High Arctic	495
Willmott's 1958 Study at Inukjuak	497
Concerns about Increasing the Size of the New Communities.....	502
Concerns about People Wishing to Move from Grise Fiord to Resolute Bay	504
Discussions about Paying Transportation Costs and Requests to Move.....	504
1959	506
Bolger's Report on the New Communities	506

Conditions at Grise Fiord, Requests to Move to Resolute Bay.....	507
Conditions at Resolute Bay, Concerns About Increasing the Size of the Community	509
1960.....	512
Requests to Move, Concern about Increasing the Size of Resolute Bay Community.....	512
Conditions at Grise Fiord.....	514
Conditions at Resolute Bay.....	516
Questions about the Operation of the Stores and the Loan Fund	517
Relations between the Inukjuak and Pond Inlet Groups at Resolute Bay	518
Bolger's Memorandum on the Object of the Relocation and the Possibility of Establishing Additional Communities.....	519
1961.....	526
Conditions at Grise Fiord.....	526
Questions about Payment for Travel.....	527
Conditions at Resolute Bay.....	529
Requests to Move	529
1962.....	530
Conditions at Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord.....	530
1963	531
Conditions at Grise Fiord.....	531
Conditions at Resolute Bay.....	532
1964.....	533
Conditions at Grise Fiord.....	533
Conditions at Resolute Bay.....	534
1965	534
Conditions at Grise Fiord.....	534
Conditions at Resolute Bay.....	535
1966.....	535
Conditions at Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay.....	535
Bissett's Study of Resolute Bay	536
Bockstoce's Study of Resolute Bay.....	538
1967	538
Conditions at Grise Fiord, Requests to Move, Freeman's Observations at Grise Fiord.....	538
1968	542
Conditions at Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay.....	542
1969 and Following	543
Returning to Inukjuak.....	543
Government Assessments of Other Relocations	545
Stevenson's 1977 Report on the Relocation	546
Chronology of Events Leading up to the Commission's Hearings	552

Appendix 4

Families Relocated to Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay in 1953

To Grise Fiord from Inukjuak

Name and Relationship in May 22, 1953 RCMP Report	Name in 1990 Makivik Documents (Surname in caps)	Name of April Witnesses in RCAP Transcripts if Different (surname in caps), Approximate Age at Relocation, and Additional Data on Relationships
Fatty – Husband	*Paddy AQIATUSUK Also known as AQUIATUSUK	Also known as Isa Paddy. Brother to Philipusie Novalinga. Adoptive father to Josephie Flaherty who relocated to Grise Fiord in 1955.
Mary – Wife Minnie – Daughter	*Mary Minnie	KILLIKTEE, Age 13.
Larry – Son	Larry	AUDLALUK, Age 3.
Samwillie – Son	Samwillie	ELIASIALUK, Age 17.
Anna – Daughter	Anna NUTARAK	NUNGAQ, Age 26.
Elijah – Son	Elijah NUTARAK	NUTARAQ, Age 21. Step-son to Paddy. Married to Elisapee (née Novalinga).
Joalamee – Husband (Son of Fatty. Also known as Joadamie/Joalamee.)	Joadamie AQIATUSUK	
Ikomak – Wife (Also known as Ekooma)	Ekoomak	
Lydia – Daughter	Lizzie	
Philapushie – Husband (Also known as Pellypussy)	*Philipusie NOVALINGA	Also known as Philipoosie.
Annine – Wife	*Annie	Sister to Thomasie and Simeonie Amagoalik.
Pailoosie – Son (Also known as Paulasis.)	*Pauloosie	
Elisapee – Daughter (Also known as Elisabee)	Elisabee	NUTARAQ, Age 10. Also known as Elisapee. Married to Elijah Nutaraq, Paddy Aquiatusuk's step-son.
Thomassie – Husband	*Thomasie AMAGOALIK	Brother to Annie Novalinga, Edith Patsauq and Simeonie Amagoalik. Simeonie and Edith were relocated to Resolute Bay in 1953.
Mary – Wife Allie – Son (Alle?) Josephie – Son (Also known Sadloovenee) Charlie – Son	Mary *Alex *Salluviniq (Not mentioned)	

*Shown in Makivik documents. Deceased as of 1990.

Families Relocated to Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay in 1953

(cont'd)

To Grise Fiord from Pond Inlet

Name and Relationship in May 22, 1953 RCMP Report	Name in 1990 Makivik Documents (Surname in caps)	Name of April Witnesses in RCAP Transcripts if Different (surname in caps), Approximate Age at Relocation, and Additional Data on Relationships
Akjaleepik – Husband (Also known as Akpakeeapik)	Simon AKPALIAPIK	Age 32.
Tataga – Wife	Tatigak	
Ootootee	*Ruthie	
Tookahsee	Inutsiak	
Muckpa	(Not mentioned)	
Angnakudlak – Husband	Samuel ANUKUDLUK	ARNAKALLAK. Age 28.
Koymayoo – Wife	*Qaumayuk	
Damaras	Tamarisee	
Rhoda	Rhoda	
Killiktee	Phoebe	
	Jonathan	
	*Mukpanuk	Grandmother to Samuel Arnakallak

To Resolute Bay from Pond Inlet

Name and Relationship in May 22, 1953 RCMP Report	Name in 1990 Makivik Documents (Surname in caps)	Name of April Witnesses in RCAP Transcripts if Different (surname in caps), Approximate Age at Relocation, and Additional Data on Relationships
Amagooalik – Husband	Jaybeddie AMAGOALIK	AMARAULIK. Age 18.
Kanoooinoo – Wife	*Kanoinoo	
+ Muckooloo	(Not mentioned)	
Ekaksak	Ekaksak	
Seepohrah	*Sippora	
Merari	Merrari	

*Shown in Makivik documents. Deceased as of 1990.

+Not mentioned in subsequent October 7, 1953 RCMP Report.

Families Relocated to Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay in 1953 (cont'd)

To Resolute Bay from Inukjuak

Name and Relationship in May 22, 1953 RCMP Report	Name in 1990 Makivik Documents (Surname in caps)	Name of April Witnesses in RCAP Transcripts if Different (surname in caps), Approximate Age at Relocation, and Additional Data on Relationships
Simeone – Husband	Simeonie AMAGOALIK	Age 20. Brother of Edith Patsauq, Thomasie Amagoalik and Annie Novalinga. Thomasie and Annie were relocated to Grise Fiord in 1953.
Sara – Wife	Sarah	Age 16. Daughter of Minnie Allakariallak who relocated in 1955. Niece of Alex Patsauq. Born in 1953 on board <i>C.D. Howe</i> .
	Paul	Age 38.
Jaybeddie – Brother of Simeone Nellie – Grandmother of Simeone	Jaybeddie *Nellie	
Alex – Husband (Also known as Allie) Edith – Wife	*Alex PATSAUQ Edith	Uncle of Sarah Amagoalik. Sister to Annie Novalinga and Simeonie, Jaybeddie and Thomasie Amagoalik. Annie and Thomasie were relocated to Grise Fiord in 1953.
Markassie – Son Lizzie – Daughter Johnnie – Son +Jimmie – son	Markoosie *Lizzie Johnny *Jimmie	Age 12. John AMAGOALIK. Age 8.
Sudlavenich – Husband Sarah – Wife Alle – Son Louisa – Daughter Jeannie – Adopted Daughter	Daniel SALLUVINIQ *Sarah Allie Louisa *Jeannie	SALLUVINIK. Age 4.

*Shown in Makivik documents. Deceased as of 1990.

+Not mentioned in subsequent October 7, 1953 RCMP Report.

Families Who Moved to Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay in 1955

To Resolute Bay from Inukjuak

Name in Undated Government Report of Inuit to be Relocated from Inukjuak in 1955	Name in 1990 Makivik Documents (Surname in caps)	Name of April Witnesses in RCAP Transcripts if Different (surname in caps), Approximate Age at Relocation, and Additional Data on Relationships
Levi – Husband	Levi NUNGAK	Older brother relocated to Resolute Bay in 1953.
Alicee – Wife	Alici	
Annie – Daughter (Age 7)	Annie	
Minnie – Daughter (Age 5)	Minnie	NUNGAQ. Age 5.
Philipussie – Son (Age 3)	Philipusie	
Anna – Daughter (Age 6 months)	Anna	
Joannie – Husband	*Johnnie ECHALOOK	
Minnie – Wife	Minnie	ALLAKARIALLAK. Age 39. Her daughter, Sarah Amagoalik and her husband, Simeonie, relocated to Resolute Bay in 1953.
Sara – Daughter (Age 20)		
Lizzie – Daughter (Age 16)	Lizzie	AMAGOALIK. Age 16.
Rynie – Daughter (Age 14)	Rynie	
Dora – Daughter (Age 13)	Dora	PUDLUK. Age 13. (Maiden name also known as IQALUK, ECKALOOK, EKALOOK). Sent to hospital in 1955. Rejoined family in 1958. ECKALOOK, EKALOOK. Age 9.
George – Son (Age 9)	George	
May – Daughter (Age 4)		
Lizzie – Daughter (Age 1)		
	Mary	ATTAGUTALUK. Age 5. Sent south to hospital in 1955.
	Leah	
Andrew – Adult Brother-in-Law of Joannie	Andrew IQALUK	Age 26. Under care of brother-in-law, Johnnie Echalook, and relocated with him.
? – Mother		
? – Sister (adult)		
? – Brother (adult)	Jackoose IQALUK	Age 22. Under care of brother-in-law, Johnnie Echalook, and relocated with him.
	Mawa	
	Martha	
	Emily	
	Mary	

*Shown in Makivik documents. Deceased as of 1990.

Families Who Moved to Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay in 1955 (cont'd)

To Grise Fiord from Inukjuak

Name in Undated Government Report of Inuit to be Relocated from Inukjuak in 1955	Name in 1990 Makivik Documents (Surname in caps)	Name of April Witnesses in RCAP Transcripts if Different (surname in caps), Approximate Age at Relocation, and Additional Data on Relationships
	Josephine FLAHERTY	Josephie – Husband. Adoptive son of Paddy Aqjatusuk who relocated to Grise Fiord in 1953.
	Rynie	Rynie – Wife. Age 27. Two-year-old daughter, Mary, diagnosed with TB and taken away at Churchill on trip to Grise Fiord. Following hospitalization, Mary was sent to Inukjuak and Resolute Bay before joining family several years later at Grise Fiord.
	Peter Martha	Age 5.

Notes:

Maina Arrugutainaq, with her mother and sister, en route to Grise Fiord in 1955, stopped in Arctic Bay. Maina and her mother completed their relocation to Grise Fiord in 1957. Maina's older sister had relocated to Grise Fiord in 1953.

The family of Joseph Idlout and another family relocated from Pond Inlet to Resolute Bay in 1955. Leah Idlout-Paulson (aged 15 at the time of relocation) and Susan Salluvinik (aged 2) are two of Joseph Idlout's children.

Appendix 5

Chronology of Events, 1982-1992

1982

- On August 16, the Deputy Minister of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND) wrote to the Inuit Committee on National Issues on the subject of the promise to return. The Deputy Minister's letter stated that "we have nothing on file to indicate that such a promise was ever made. Even if it had been, I suspect that it was for a limited number of years following their location..." .
- The Makivik Research Department published a paper by W.B. Kemp, "The relocation of Inuit from the Port Harrison region of Hudson Bay to the High Arctic communities of Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord" which stated that "certain aspects of relocation imply that sovereignty was considered but not as a central issue".

1983

- The Minister of DIAND (Munro) presented a discussion paper prepared by Environment Canada entitled "Environment Canada and the North" at the Third General Assembly of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference held in Iqaluit in July which stated that "to further entrench the sovereignty claim the government relocated Inuit people from northern Quebec to the Arctic islands in the mid-1950s".

1984

- Mark M. Hammond, an independent consultant, is commissioned by DIAND to determine whether there had in fact been a promise to return the relocatees. The report of August 3, 1984 indicated that Inuit who were moved to the High Arctic in 1950s quite likely received a promise from the government that they could return after two years if they so desired.

1985

- In February, the Minister of DIAND (Crombie) met with Inuit relocatees at Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord. The relocatees claimed that they had been promised that if they wanted to return after two years they could do so, but that their requests were turned down. They discussed the relocation issue

with the Minister and the re-settlement back to Inukjuak for those who might wish to return.

- The December report of the Task Force to Review Comprehensive Claims Policy, *Living Treaties: Lasting Agreements*, states that “thirty years ago the federal government strengthened Canadian sovereignty by moving several hundred Inuit from northern Quebec to Ellesmere and Cornwallis islands in the High Arctic, where they establish the communities of Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay”.

1987

- Makivik, ITC and the Kativik Regional Government issue a “Position Paper regarding Grise Fiord/Resolute Bay relocation issue” (January 20), dealing with such matters as the building of 13 new housing units in Inukjuak and moving expenses for individuals and families who had already returned to Inukjuak and those who still intended to return, as well as other compensatory and remedial measures. All these demands were presented again to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs on March 19, 1990.
- On September 30, the Minister of DIAND (McKnight) agrees to fund the construction of ten new housing units in Inukjuak and to pay for the transportation of those who might wish to move in 1988-89. The Minister also offered to provide some recognition for the contribution of the Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay communities toward asserting Canadian Arctic sovereignty. Alternatively, the Minister raised the possibility that the relocation of Inuit from northern Quebec to Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay could be recognized specifically as an event of national historical significance.

1988

- The government proceeds to reimburse families who had returned previously to Inukjuak at their own expenses and to defray the moving cost of families who wished to return to Inukjuak.
- The government undertakes the construction of 10 new housing units in Inukjuak, after the Inuit had requested 13 units.
- In the July-September period, 22 Inuit move back to Inukjuak.
- The Minister declines, however, to continue discussions on the other items included in the Makivik/ITC Position Paper.

1989

- On March 23, Makivik writes the Minister of DIAND (Cadieux) requesting action on their demands for compensatory and remedial measures still outstanding.
- On May 12, the Minister replies that the federal government had fulfilled all its commitments in relation to the relocation of the Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay Inuit and therefore he does “*not believe that a meeting is necessary to discuss this situation*”.

1990

- On March 19, ITC and Makivik representatives as well as Inuit relocatees appear before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, table a Position Paper and testify on the relocation issue.
- The Deputy Minister of DIAND submits a 10-page response to the Standing Committee on May 15, 1990, providing the government’s view on the relocation issue and arguing that the “records indicate, quite simply, that there was no malice or wrongdoing by departmental officers in the relocation project. The basic motivation – the assurance of country food supplies and somewhat enhanced employment opportunities – was honourable, and there seems to have been some effort to anticipate and avoid the inevitable problems of relocation”.

In the words of the Deputy Minister, “It is 37 years since the first people moved from Inukjuak to Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord. With the passage of time, the facts surrounding the project have become altered in the memories of the people concerned. It is important to examine the beliefs of the present, which are undoubtedly sincere, in the light of observations made at the time.”

The letter also stated that “feelings are not facts, no matter how fervently held. They should not be allowed to obscure the historical record”.

- In its June 19 unanimous report to the House of Commons, the Standing Committee recommends that the government
 1. acknowledge the role played by the Inuit relocated to the High Arctic in the protection of Canadian sovereignty in the North;
 2. issue an apology for wrongdoings carried out against the people of Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay;
 3. carry out such an apology with due solemnity and respect;
 4. accompany the apology with some form of recognition of the contribution of the Inuit of Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay to Canadian sovereignty; and

- 5. consider compensation to the Inuit of these two communities for their service to Canada and for the wrongdoings inflicted upon them.
- Following the tabling of the Standing Committee report in the House of Commons, DIAND commissions the Hickling Corporation, an independent consultant mutually acceptable to both Makivik and DIAND, to assess the factual basis of the allegations that led to the Standing Committee report, as they relate to the Department. The Hickling report, “Assessment of the factual basis of certain allegations made before the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs concerning the relocation of Inukjuak Inuit families in the 1950s”, is completed in September. The report is based primarily on a documentary survey, although the researchers “also interviewed a number of key informants, including some members of the Inuit groups that were involved in the relocations that are the subject of our study”. (p. 3)

The main findings and conclusions of the Hickling report were that the primary motivation for the relocation was to improve the living conditions of the Inuit; reasonable preparations were made for the relocation, including reasonable steps to explain the relocation to the Inuit, although some Inuit may not have understood what was involved; a promise was made to return the relocatees but it was not of indefinite duration; there was no wilful wrongdoing by the government; and there was no reason for the government to apologize.

- On November 19, the Minister of DIAND (Siddon) tables the government’s response to the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, rejecting the Committee’s five recommendations. The government’s response indicates that compensation is appropriate only with respect to paying for relocatees to return to Inukjuak.

1991

- In January, the Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC), at the urging of the Inuit, decides to review the complaints made by the Inuit before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and makes informal arrangement with ITC and DIAND to conduct a review of the complaints and their surrounding circumstances. The CHRC review is carried out by Dr. Daniel Soberman, a former Dean of Queen’s University Law School. In the course of his review, Soberman visits Grise Fiord, Resolute Bay, Pond Inlet and Inukjuak and interviews many of the original Inuit relocatees as well as former and current civil servants, including RCMP officers. All relevant documents are made available to Soberman by interested parties. Dr. Soberman reports (in December) that

- (i) “[On] the balance of probabilities, it is reasonable to conclude that sovereignty was a material, even if not a dominant, concern of the Canadian Government and may well have influenced relocation decisions”. (p. 12)
- (ii) The government failed to meet its fiduciary duties of care and diligence in not taking steps in the first few years to honour its promise of return and in planning and carrying out the relocation. (p. 56)
- (iii) The relocatees of 1953 suffered unnecessary hardship, particularly in the first year – as did to a lesser extent the relocatees in 1955 – caused by inadequate planning and implementation of the project. (p. 56)
- (iv) the hardship of the Inuit was aggravated by the long delays and difficulties that many of the first-generation relocatees encountered in finding their way back to Inukjuak, resulting in long-distance separation of different generations of the same family. (p. 56)
- Soberman recommends that the government formally acknowledge the contribution of the Inuit relocatees to Canadian sovereignty in the High Arctic and thank them publicly; that the government apologize for shortcomings in planning the relocation, particularly with respect to providing adequate equipment and housing for the first winter, and in failing to provide schools and nursing facilities in the early years.

Soberman recommends further that the government recognize its responsibility for its failure to honour its promise to return Inuit to Inukjuak and for the unhappy consequences for many Inuit families. He also recommends that the government relocate any other Inuit desiring to return to Inukjuak and to provide them with housing as well as fund regular visits between families and the communities of Grise Fiord/Resolute Bay and Inukjuak. Soberman did not specifically discuss the question of compensation, believing that this would be the subject of a future mediation, which in fact did not take place.

1992

- On January 15, the Minister of DIAND, commenting on Dr. Soberman’s report, notes with satisfaction that the report recognized “that the primary motivations for the project were humane” and that “this is the second independent study to reject the claim that the project was primarily an effort by Canada to assert sovereignty in the Arctic”. The Minister also notes that Soberman pointed out hardships created by supply problems in the first winter, by the separation resulting from relocation, by the difficulties of communications between Inuit and non-Inuit, and by delays in returning those who eventually wanted to go back to Inukjuak. The Minister notes that all these concerns had been acknowledged by the government of Canada, that approximately \$1 million had already been provided to return relocatees, and that

the moving expenses of any other Inuit who wanted to return to Inukjuak would be paid for by the government. Finally, the Minister indicates that the other recommendations of the Soberman report were generally acceptable to the government and that he would want to discuss them with the Inuit to determine how and when they could be implemented.

- On the same day, the representatives of ITC express satisfaction with the Soberman report, indicating that it validates many of the complaints of the Inuit relocatees. The ITC underlines Professor Soberman's finding that the government of Canada had failed in its fiduciary duties of care and diligence toward the relocatees. The ITC requests the government to honour their request for the establishment of a Heritage Trust Fund and for compensation.
- On February 11, the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs presents a second report to the House of Commons. Noting that new evidence reaffirmed and reinforced the earlier views of the Committee, it recommends unanimously that the government implement, through consultation with the Inuit people, the recommendations contained in its report to the House of Commons of June 19, 1990.
- On June 4, Makivik and ITC issue a press release indicating that the Minister of DIAND had refused to meet with Inuit relocatees to resolve their outstanding claims.
- On June 8, four relocatees who had moved back to Inukjuak testify before a panel of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples in Inukjuak. The Co-Chair informs the witnesses that the Commission will look into the matter and get back to them.
- Nine months earlier (August 1991), and while the Soberman review was under way, DIAND commissions Professor Magnus Gunther of the Department of Political Studies, Trent University, to conduct further documentary research into all the allegations made concerning the relocation, including those of the Inuit witnesses appearing before the Standing Committee in 1990 and those contained in the studies published after the completion of the Hickling Report. Gunther reaches the following conclusions:
 - (i) "There was no *de facto* or *de jure* threat to Canadian sovereignty on Ellesmere Island" (p. 376) and the evidence against the sovereignty claim "is overwhelming". (p. 75)
 - (ii) On the question of whether the Inuit relocatees fully understood the proposal to relocate, Gunther found that "the fact that their understanding of the project was far from complete does not mean that it was non-voluntary nor that it was an unreasonable decision to make". The relocatees "were among the poorest of the poor in the district". (pp. 151-152)

- (iii) After noting that “the main purpose of the projects was to deal with was perceived to be a problem of over population in relation to resources in northern Quebec”, Gunther found that, “the planning for what supplies the trading post would carry was neither perfect nor incompetent. A few serious errors were made.” (p. 245)
- (iv) He noted that there are “repeated statements in the documents guaranteeing the Inuit they could return after one or two years if the re-settlement did not suit them”. He also found that officials in the field conveyed “to volunteers some of the changes they would face in the High Arctic, the two-month long dark period, short days and one annual supply visit”. (p. 246)
- (v) Gunther acknowledges that “the separation of the groups was handled inadequately, caused unnecessary hardship and showed an unacceptable level of insensitivity towards the Inuit settlers and was high-handed”. (p. 247)
- (vi) Gunther also found that “the arrangements for employment at Resolute were not inadequate given the objectives of the project and the time of year the settlers arrived”. He noted as well that the “missing supplies” at Resolute undoubtedly added to the stress of the first year, but expressed the view that DIAND “should not be blamed for the failings of the department of Transport”. (p. 248)
- (vii) In the end, Gunther concluded that “in general, the *preparations*, given the truncated resources of the Department, the abject poverty of the participants, the parsimonious approach to government spending and the obsession with self-help and individual responsibility of the day, were adequate and acceptable”. (p. 250, emphasis in the original)
- (viii) Gunther agreed with previous findings that the government had made promises to the Inuit that they could return to Inukjuak if they were not happy in the High Arctic and that the government did not honour this promise.

- On November 20, the Minister of DIAND (Siddon) tables a response to the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs on the relocation of the Inukjuak Inuit to Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay.

The response indicates that the government has taken account of research completed following the Hickling Report and relied upon the findings of the CHRC report (Soberman) and, on points of historical detail, the research conducted by Professor Gunther.

The specific government responses to each of the recommendations of the Standing Committee can be summarized as follows:

- (i) The Inuit were relocated from Inukjuak to Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay to assist them to continue to pursue their traditional way of life based on hunting and trapping. The response noted that the economic circumstances of most of those relocated did improve in comparison to their former situation. The response emphasized that the relocation was not made to affirm or protect Canadian sovereignty in the High Arctic. It acknowledged, however, that the Inuit presence had made a valuable contribution to building the Canadian presence in the region.
- (ii) The relocation having been initiated with humane intentions and based upon the consent of those moved, it would be inappropriate for the government to apologize for having initiated and carried out the relocation.

In referring to the Soberman report, the government acknowledged, however, that there were deficiencies in the manner in which the relocation was prepared and implemented and that the Inuit suffered both emotional and physical stress as a result of being moved so far from their own community and relatives and being separated from their peers and companions. The government also acknowledged that their first year in the Arctic was a very difficult one.

The government acknowledged that it had behaved inappropriately in the failure to honour the promise made to the Inuit at the time of the relocation to return them to Inukjuak if they were not happy in the High Arctic. The government indicated that it was prepared to implement the recommendations of the Soberman report in that regard.

- (iii) Although the government was not prepared to apologize for undertaking the relocation, it was ready to acknowledge that there were shortcomings in the planning and implementation of the project, causing unintended emotional and physical hardship.
- (iv) The government was prepared to recognize the contribution of the relocated Inuit to the building of Canada's presence in the far North and to discuss with the Inuit a suitable memorial to commemorate the establishment of Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay in the 1950s.
- (v) Finally, the government was prepared to take further corrective action, including expenditures for further relocations to Inukjuak, for additional housing if required, and for visits between family members, but the government indicated that payment of additional compensation was not contemplated.
- On November 26, the ITC, on behalf of the Inuit relocatees, rejects the Minister's response to the Standing Committee recommendations, taking serious objection to the findings of the Gunther report and labelling both the government response and the Gunther report "an insult".

The ITC repeated that the relocation was imposed upon the Inuit without their free and informed consent and, in addition, that it was executed poorly and in a manner that was inexcusably insensitive to the most basic needs of the Inuit as human beings.

Specifically, the ITC argued that the federal government had breached its fiduciary duty to the Inuit, first, in failing to obtain the free and informed consent of the Inuit to relocate; secondly, in its failure to provide properly for basic food, shelter and other necessities of life; and third, in its failure to fulfil its promises not to separate the families upon arrival in the High Arctic and to provide for the return of the Inuit at their option. The ITC called upon the Standing Committee “to study the federal government’s inadequate and insulting response”.

- On December 14, the ITC writes to the Co-Chairs of the Royal Commission indicating that more extensive testimony is required from the relocatees, as their testimony before the House of Commons Standing Committee in 1990 needed elaboration and corroboration. A formal request for hearings was made.

Appendix 6

The Eskimo Loan Fund

As discussed in the body of the report, the Eskimo Affairs Committee recommended the establishment of an Eskimo Loan Fund, which subsequently received the necessary appropriation from Parliament. The directions given to the RCMP detachments in the High Arctic concerning the Eskimo Loan Fund, the absence of Inuit consent to the loans, and the operation of the stores were discussed in the report. The parliamentary appropriation for the Loan Fund specified that loans were to be for commercial purposes, and loans were to be given at a rate of interest established by the Treasury Board. This appendix provides a general description of how the Eskimo Loan Fund operated.

The loan arrangements, as they relate to the relocation, can be understood by use of an example.¹ Suppose that a person obtained a loan from the Eskimo Loan Fund to establish a commercial venture such as a store. Let us also assume the loan is an interest-only loan. The person would take the loan and set up the store – obtaining space, purchasing stock, etc. The person would then sell the stock at a price that covered the cost of operating the store – rent, purchase of stock (including transportation costs), wages, and interest on the loan – plus a reasonable profit. The profit would accrue to the owner of the store, to be used as he or she saw fit, possibly, for example, to be reinvested in additional stock or used for other purposes. A prudent owner would use the portion of the store's revenues related to the cost of the goods sold to purchase replacement stock. In other words, with an interest-only loan, a prudent owner would use the principal of the loan as a fund to sustain the inventory of the store. The interest paid on the loan would amount to the 'profit' for the lender, in this example the government. However, the principal would remain outstanding until demanded by the lender or voluntarily repaid by the debtor.

If the loan required the repayment of both principal and interest (as is common with consumer loans), over a specified period of time (one year, two years, etc.) the principal would be repaid along with the interest. In this case, to replenish stock, the store owner would have to use her/his own money, obtained perhaps from the store's profits, or would need to renew the loan. Such an arrangement could, therefore, lead to a series of loans, with a new loan being made as each previous loan was paid off so that the inventory of the store could be maintained.

In the Arctic at that time, it was the common practice for Inuit to be paid wages from employment in kind instead of in cash. Family allowance and old age

¹ It may be noted that there were individual Inuit who were engaged in commercial activities. Fred Carpenter in the Western Arctic had a schooner that he wished to outfit for whale hunting. He received a loan under the Eskimo Loan Fund for this purpose.

security were also paid in kind. This meant that the store had to maintain accounts for individual customers showing the credits they had accrued on account of wages or family allowance, etc. The store owner would then collect the money from the employer or, in the case of family allowance and OAS, from the government. The store could use this money like any other revenue received from operating the store, subject to making good to its customers on the credits in their individual accounts at the store.

In the example described above, there is a clear distinction between the status of the loan and the operation of the store. The relationships between the lender and the borrower, between the store owner and suppliers, and between the store owner and the customers are also clearly defined. The reality of the store operation funded by the Eskimo Loan Fund in the new High Arctic communities was very different. The distinction between the operation of the Loan Fund and the operation of the stores became blurred.

Gunther reports that there were two loans of \$5,000 each for the stores at Craig Harbour/Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay. As specified in the appropriation approved by Parliament, Treasury Board required that loans be made for a commercial, or profit-making, purpose.² This explains why the Department established a mark-up on the goods sold at the new stores.

The rate of interest was set by Treasury Board at 5 per cent.³ The loans were to be repaid from the profits from the stores.⁴

The stores were, in substance, run by the government, with the local RCMP looking after the accounts, the sale of goods, and the purchase from the Inuit of trade items. The Department looked after ordering the annual supplies. As noted, wages, family allowances, OAS payments and the value of traded items, such as furs, were to be credited to the accounts of individual customers. This account keeping was not always done consistently well, and it is possible that

² Gunther, p. 325. Gunther suggests that in 1953 Craig Harbour received the \$5,000 in goods destined for the store that was to have been established at Cape Herschel as well as the \$5,000 in goods Craig Harbour was to receive according to the plan (p. 320). If this is right, it is not clear how this was accounted for under the Loan Fund in light of the report (p. 325) that the loan for Craig Harbour was \$5,000. It is also not clear how the \$6,800 in trade items purchased from the Inuit led to the Craig Harbour store being "cleaned out" (p. 320). The value of items traded by the Inuit did not correspond necessarily to purchases, and credits were being built up at Craig Harbour from the very beginning. In any event, it is clear that, whatever the value of goods delivered to Craig Harbour in 1953, they were inadequate, as discussed in the main body of this report.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 326.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 325.

some people did not receive proper credit to their accounts and so lost the benefit of wage or family allowance payments.⁵

All the money coming into the store went back to the Department as if the Department were the owner of the store. The Department collected the wages from the employer or collected the family allowance payment from the applicable department. These moneys were applied to the loan account that the Department kept for each of the \$5,000 loans under the Eskimo Loan Fund. In other words, all the revenues received through the stores were applied to the Department's loan account.⁶ Once the outstanding loan balance was reduced to zero, the revenues received would apparently be recorded as a credit to the loan account. Credits built up quickly in the loan accounts for Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord. However, in 1956 Treasury Board found that freight had not been charged on goods sent to the stores, and charges for transporting goods for the previous three years were made against the credits in the loan accounts. This eliminated the credit balance for the Grise Fiord store and, Gunther suggests, also for the Resolute Bay store.⁷

This way of handling store revenues was consistent with a store established, owned and operated by the government, but it is not what one would expect of a loan made for a commercial purpose. The theory and the reality of the Loan Fund's operation did not coincide.

The government also sold the items – furs, crafts, etc. – traded at the stores. The Department paid the Inuit a fixed price for furs. When the furs were subsequently sold by the Department, the amounts received often exceeded what had been paid to the Inuit. The Department applied these revenues to the loan account for each store in the same way as revenues from wages or family allowances. However, unlike the case of wages or family allowances, where individuals were given credit on their individual accounts at the stores, the profits made from selling furs were not credited back to the store accounts of individual trappers. Instead, the profits accrued in the Department's loan account.⁸

Bent Sivertz, for one, was critical of the Loan Fund arrangement and advocated the establishment of co-operative stores. This was done in 1960. Gunther reports that by 1960 the loan accounts for the Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay stores had a substantial credit balance, which was rolled over to the co-operative

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 333- 335, where Gunther speaks of the errors made in keeping the accounts. However, because many records no longer exist, it is not possible to determine what occurred with individual accounts.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 326.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 334.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 326, 329, 334.

stores.⁹ If so, the communities as a whole, not individual trappers and not the government, received the benefit of the profits from fur sales.

As noted earlier, if goods at the stores were insufficient to pay in kind the amounts credited to individuals on account of wages, family allowance, etc., then these credit balances would constitute a form of forced savings. It is not clear whether these savings were eventually used for special, e.g., mail order, purchases; were transferred to bank accounts in the name of the individual Inuk; or were transferred over to the accounts of the co-operative stores once these were established. It is possible that different approaches were taken for different people, since one finds discussion over the years about establishing bank accounts or using the money for special purchases.¹⁰

In summary, the distinction between the operation of the Loan Fund and the operation of the trade stores was blurred. The result was confusion over accounts and the amounts to which individuals were entitled. Bookkeeping errors at the store level added to the confusion. The arrangements were, in substance, more like government-established and -operated stores than commercial loans.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 330, 334.

¹⁰ Many records no longer exist, so it is not possible to determine what occurred with individual accounts.

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The
High Arctic
Relocation
1953

NORTH POLE ☆

The High Arctic Relocation, 1953

Arctic
Ocean



Legend

→ Route of the Relocation ~ Inukjuak to Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay, 1953.

→ Unsuccessful Attempt to Reach Cape Herschel.

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